



던전 디펜스

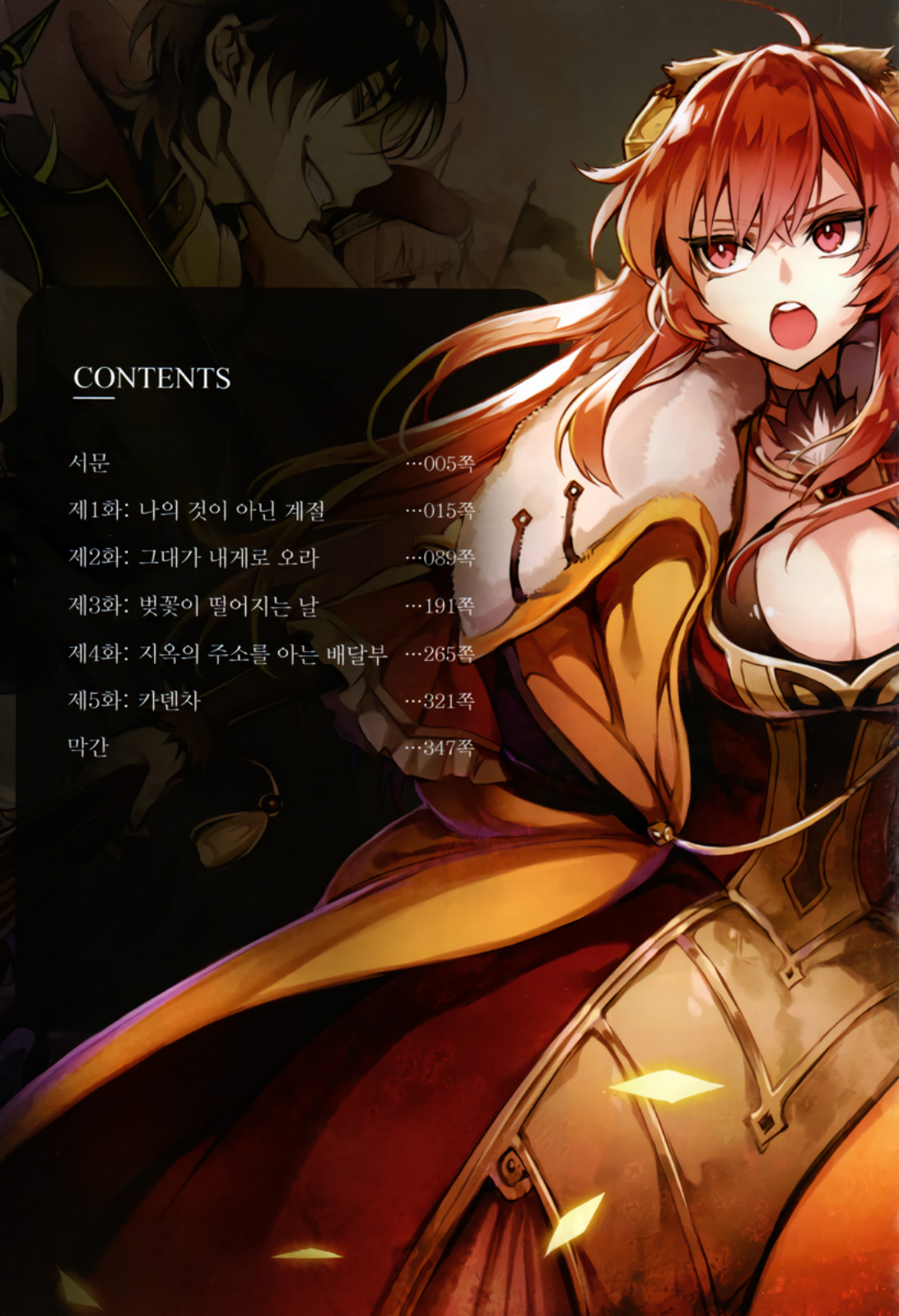
DUNGEON DEFENSE 01판 12월 - CO-OP 2인 1인





CONTENTS

서문	...005쪽
제1화: 나의 것이 아닌 계절	...015쪽
제2화: 그대가 내게로 오라	...089쪽
제3화: 벚꽃이 떨어지는 날	...191쪽
제4화: 지옥의 주소를 아는 배달부	...265쪽
제5화: 카텐차	...321쪽
막간	...347쪽



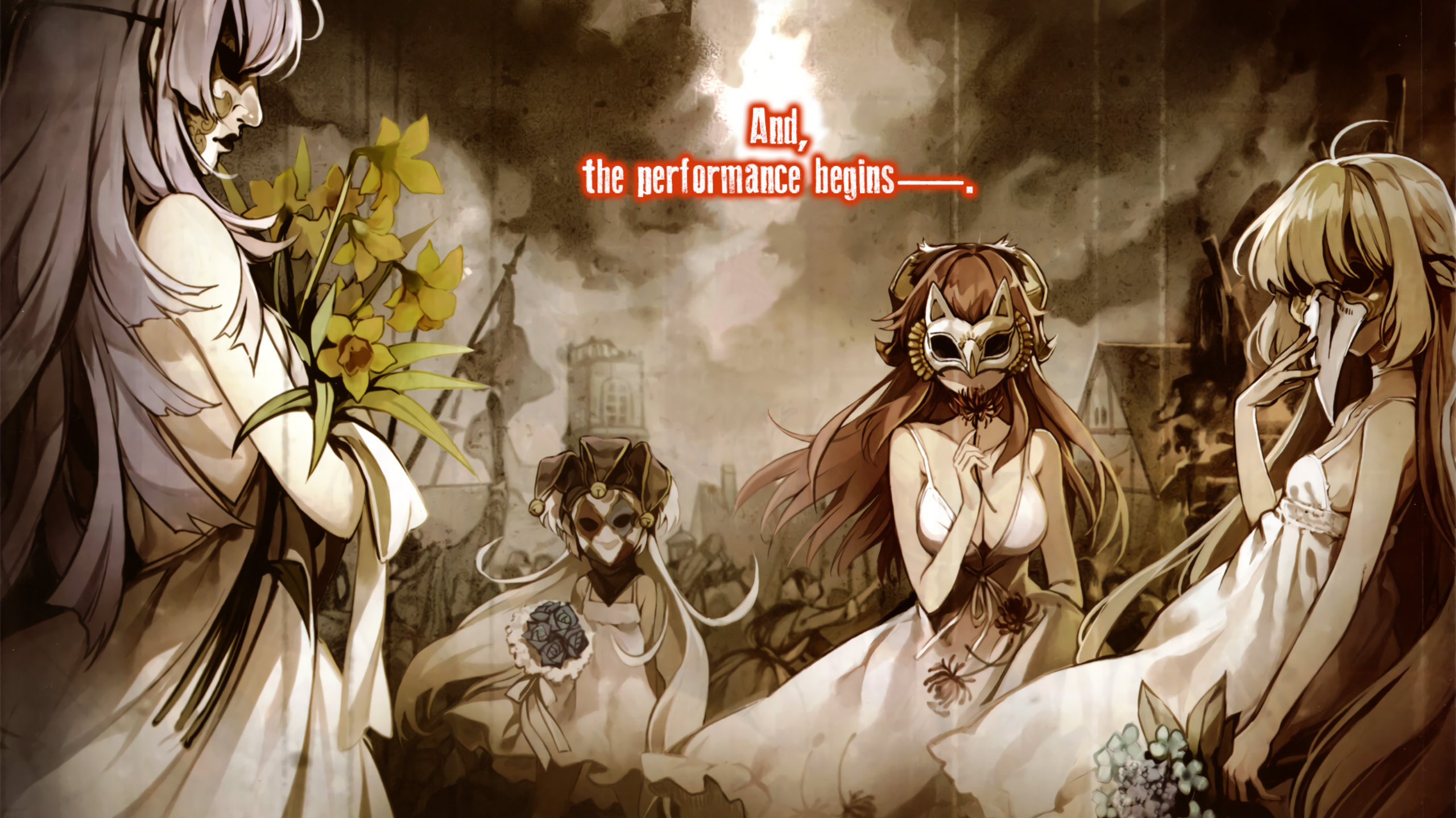


And—

Spring,
Summer,
Autumn,
Winter.

And,
cherry blossoms.

And,
the performance begins——.



Dungeon Defense (던전 디펜스) - Volume 04 by Yoo Heonhwa (유현화).

Published by Novel Engine (영상출판미디어) in 2016.

Illustrations by [cocorip](#)

Translated by [Shalvation](#)

Edited by Rando & itachuu

eBook & typesetting & cleaning by [Olivki](#)

Scans by ampzz

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

!! If you're reading this in the EPUB format, I highly recommend reading it via the PDF format instead. The PDF version works a lot better for this volume due to the sheer amount of images that are used. EPUB readers have a tendency to shrink images rather than preserve their full size. If you choose to ignore this, just don't come complaining about the images being hard to read, that's on the reader, not me. !!

— **B**lood, merely more blood.

The blood-covered girl slaughters mankind.

「From now on, we are the ‘enemy of the world’。」

The battleground is thick with smoke.

And ten thousand soldiers swing their spears here and there.

All around, ears become deafened by the sole sound of metal.

The Demon Lord smirks while hiding beyond the smoke, and a single girl becomes a puppet and dances on the battlefield.

Making the soldiers, who will soon perish and disappear, the audience.

Making the sound of metal, that will soon dissipate and vanish, the applause.

Although people are appalled when they see the girl.

In an out of the way place, people gather and talk in whispers
——.

「Who is Laura De Farnese?」

You are me.

"They say that harlot sold her body to the demons."

"Didn't they say that she's a lady from a Duke's House? Surely not."

"Whose young lady is that young lady? Rumors that her mother was a whore are spread wide."

"Is there proof?"

"Proof? There is. There is certainly proof. I've seduced plenty of prostitutes in my life, so now I can immediately tell if a person is a whore or not just by looking at their face, and that girl is a whore right from her physiognomy. In other words, you can see it as her own face being the proof to her whoreness."

"I wonder about that. Just that alone seems a bit lacking to claim that she's a whore. Honestly speaking, it's lacking quite a lot. I'm not entirely sure whether she's a whore or not, but the one thing I can certainly see is the fact that you have a dirty rag in your mouth."

"Yeah? And your brain level is close to that of a bucket of rags."

"She was as pretty as pretty can be, though. I heard that her eloquence is fluent and she's good at war. Who was it again? The Demon Lord's name.....Dandelion?"

"Dantalian"

"Yeah, Dantalian. He's the one who placed such a pretty girl as his subordinate. It feels as if that man is really blessed."

"Though, whether he's blessed or it's some repetition, we'll have to wait and see."

"They say that his hip skills are impressive. Like this, ahah? Hiyah? Like this and that. Appetizingly every night. In truth, people also say that he didn't take her in to be his acting general but to be his concubine instead. "

"How vulgar."

"That's terrible."

"Gyrate a bit better, I say!"

"I'm really going nuts."

"So, what's her name?"

"Farnese?"

"Laura De Farnese."

"....."

"....."

".....I can't understand. Why do competent women get caught by incompetent men? It's as if there's some sort of law. Occasionally, it almost feels as if the competent woman is actually incompetent, and the incompetent man is actually competent."

"That's simple. When you go out with a competent man, then there's a taste that you aren't able to have, but, you're able to taste a special and particular flavor when going out with an incompetent man."

"And what's that supposed to be?"

"Like I said, it's..... nevermind. If you want to experience that taste then you first have to have been born as a competent woman, but even if you die and come back to life, you most likely will never become a competent woman. I don't have the duty to painstakingly explain to you something that may or may not happen after you die and are reborn."

"Not only is that not an explanation, but it shows to me the fact that you're cowardly, cheap, and possibly also stupid."

"And so, that bitch....."

"They say she sold her body, you know?"

"Betraying her own kind and towards the demons."

"With a beautiful appearance, that befits a whore."

"Yes, with sweet eloquence."

"Because she's also able to kill people well."

"With outstanding dexterity."

"De Farnese."

"Laura---."

"Laura De Farnese." "The whore who betrayed mankind."

"The human who slaughtered humans."

"The swindler who instigates peasants."

"She even fooled the Gods with that pretty face of hers."

"How could she sell her soul to demons and kill her own kind."

"Duke Farnese was wise. It's only appropriate to nip the bud when that bitch was really young. Think about it. Even when she was sold off as a slave, she grew up to be that atrocious. If that bitch weren't a slave, then how much more terrible would she have become?"

"They say she even has a hobby of gathering skulls."

"Skulls?"

"Dear Lord."

"Indeed. They say that she not only collects skulls, but she piles them up and plays the piano beside them as well. While humming. She probably gets excited by the bones of her kind that she slaughtered. I wouldn't be surprised if the number of skulls she gathered and gathered reached tens of thousands now....."

"Dear God."

"Hmm. In the side of preferences, I feel like that person and I could bond for some reason."

"You be quiet."

"Her nature has rotted all the way to her roots. Doesn't it almost seem as if she were a scumbag that was born in order to curse the world.....?"

"A filthy and boorish bitch."

"An annoying and tenacious bitch."

"Yup. I can't bear the fact that that sort of person is breathing and living right now. It'd be great if she just died already. If that's not possible, then she should go somewhere that I can't see, albeit I can't even see her now, I wish she'd completely fuck off to some remote faraway place where even news of her won't reach me."

"I heard there are peasants who support that harlot."

"Do you think they're peasants for no reason? What would bumpkins know? Every day they go around parading their own ignorance in the neighborhood they live in, the place that's too pitiful to even consider a neighborhood, a place that's in the far corner of the world."

"Ignore them."

"Scorn them."

"But don't ignore them completely, scoff at them whenever the opportunity presents itself. By doing so, we can show them the fact that we're ignoring them more excellently and explicitly."

"Now you're using your head a bit."

"The collector of skulls."

"The whore who betrayed mankind."

"The swindler who instigates peasants."

"The one who plays the piano beside corpses----."

"Laura----."

Laura De Farnese.

Chapter One

The Season That Is Not Mine

□ The King of Peasants, Rank 71st, Dantalian
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 3
Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance

The female and male dogs that I saw yesterday were mating today as well.

In the middle of the plain. While forcefully making those humans over there and the demons here into their audience, they were copulating in front of a massive army that was no less than two hundred thousand. The soldiers tossed stones at them and laughed. Although both the humans and demons were laughing, they were both too far away to actually hit the dogs, so within the field that couldn't be touched, the mutts were able to mate freely.

—— Do not throw stones!

—— Behave, you scoundrels. The Gods are watching.

The noncommissioned officers lashed the bottoms of the soldiers. They cautioned them to not disturb the dogs. They said that it was imprudent. To me, it was vague whether the soldiers, who were throwing stones at the mutts when a war was about to unfold, were the ones who were imprudent, or the officers, who were going out of their way to scold the soldiers, were the ones who were actually imprudent. Do not throw stones..... stop throwing..... The sounds of stones being tossed and the sounds of urging resonated all the way to the far fields, and as it spread out far, it slowly extended the time of

the field.

Farnese muttered flatly.

“They are late. Did you say it was the Imperial Princess Elizabeth?”

“That is right. Albeit, I expected her to come out right away.”

Us two, master and servant, were standing side by side and gazing at the human army encampment over on the other side of the plain.

The negotiation area where the Imperial Princess and I had played Go in this morning had completely burned down. The tent had turned into rubble and was sprawled out in the center of the field. The Crown Prince of the Empire and the descendants of the Margrave were most likely dead underneath those remains. Although we were unable to see the corpses from here, crows would occasionally swoop down and disappear between the rubble. I pictured in my mind the image of the crows pecking and eating away at the bare facial area of the Crown Prince who had his face skinned off. The meat which was earnestly skinned and cooked to a crisp most likely suited the taste of the crows.

Our speech had ended. It was now the Imperial Princess Elizabeth's turn to give hers. Due to the fact that the Imperial Princess has still yet to show herself, the soldiers were passing their time with the mating dogs.

Every now and then, the soldiers of the demon army would jeer at the lateness of the human army representative by shouting ‘Boo……’. Come out already, what are you doing, did they run away because they're scared……? Despite that, the Imperial Princess did not reveal herself. Side by side, the copulating mutts, the corpse eating crows, and the soldiers that came here in order to go to war all appeared to be at leisure.

“Farnese, do you believe in God?”

“The Gods did not help this young lady even when her life was grim. Be it a God or a Devil, if they do not help this young lady, then

what is there to care about? This young lady does not strain her nerves for needless things.”

Farnese looked this way.

“How about you, Lord? Do you believe in God?”

“Of course. It is difficult to find someone who is as purely devout as I am.”

“I see Your Lordship’s ridiculousness is bitter today.”

“I will see you after the speech is over.”

“For what reason does Your Lordship have to see this young lady later? This young lady is right before Your Lordship’s eyes at this very moment. Look at this young lady’s beautiful face as much as Your Lordship desires until you become tired of it. Oh, now that this young lady thinks about it, was Your Lordship not a eunuch who is unable to get aroused when looking at women besides Miss Lapis? Lord, this young lady apologizes. This young lady did not consider Your Lordship’s impotence. Since this young lady has ignored the situation of Your Lordship’s lower half, she cannot be truly referred to as your faithful subject.”

“This girl…….”

She’s quite elated just because she finished giving her speech.

Of course, in Farnese’s position, she must be delighted. Even if she had acted after having become my puppet, she was finally able to drop her name into the world. Her name will most likely be recorded in history as the revolutionist of the century. Different to Lapis and I, who pursued absolute authority, Farnese chased after reputation, and this very day was now her splendid anniversary day.

Similar to a young child who was delighted at having received a gift.

This girl known as Laura De Farnese was purely feeling pleased.

Despite the fact that she had actually driven mankind into an endless slaughter.

“This young lady’s speech was perfect.”

Farnese spoke.

“To be exact, it would be correct to say that it was a speech that was achieved through the cooperation of Your Lordship and this young lady. Henceforth, the continent will be split into two ranks and the countryside will be strewn with corpses and drenched with blood. Is Your Lordship still worried about the woman known as Elizabeth despite that? Honestly speaking, this young lady is not afraid.”

“.....”

I glanced at the plain spread out before us. There was no need to give an answer. Even if she were unaware now, she will see it for herself soon enough and will thus understand once she has witnessed it. Although there were many people in the world who were incapable of understanding something despite having seen it themselves, Farnese was my greatest pupil. She will be able to realize it well on her own.

The wind blew over the field. Woosh……. Due to the sudden shower that came down this morning, our vision could not reach out far and was forced to flicker within a close area. Everything was close. The rough palms of the noncommissioned officers which were striking the soldiers were close, the panting of the female and male dogs that were mating was close, and the violently flapping enemy flags on the other side of the field were close. Woooosh……. The wind blew for a moment, and the field became still after the drivel was swept away. I could sense that something was approaching.

“She’s here.”

“What are you referring to, Lord?”

“Watch well. That is your sworn enemy.”

Farnese tilted her head and turned towards the place I was gazing at. It was at the instant she had fully turned her gaze. Elizabeth’s speech started as if it were a gust of wind that was blowing from that side of the field to this.

—— Soldiers of many nations, do not be fooled by the sweet whispers of the devil.

As if hundreds of thousands of soldiers were being guided by the wind, their gaze went towards the girl. We were unable to see the Imperial Princess herself because she was too far away, however, solely her voice felt endlessly near.

—— They are all demons and monsters. Have you all not lost your parents, friends, and comrades to the wicked fangs of those monsters? Behold. For someone who is wearing the skin of humans, that girl is standing between those monsters. I refer to the ones who live alongside devils as a devil themselves so that child is certainly one of them.

I pulled out a portable telescope from my coat and looked out into the distance. My vision moved between banners and flags. As I was still unable to see where the Imperial Princess Elizabeth was, I carefully estimated her location solely by the sound of her voice which felt as if it were being whispered directly into my ear.

—— The devil spoke. They claimed that we had killed our own

people. Where can you find a lie that is as immense as this? The devil stated that you all are on their side and are their allies. Where else can you find a lie that is as massive as this as well?

— This is something that you all should ask yourselves. 400 years ago, who were the ones to put their lives on the line in order to protect the continent? 300 years ago, who were the ones to abandon their lives in order to protect mankind?

— 250 years ago, who were the ones to swing their blades underneath the white walls until the last man standing? 200 years ago, who were the ones to charge towards the monsters on the Plains of Ulm?

— And on this day, in order to fight against a hundred thousand monsters once more, there are people here who have thrown everything aside for their family, for their sons and daughters, and for the Gods. This is something you must ask yourselves! Who are these people!?

— That is so. These people are you.

— 400 years ago, 300 years ago, 200 years ago, and here on this very day, the ones devoting their lives in order to protect the continent are you, and solely you!

Elizabeth declared. She did not make any wasted breaths. Because there was no needless noise, it felt as if her voice was a melody that was slowly intensifying. The human soldiers were entranced by the tune and were all facing towards a single spot. With my telescope, I followed their gazes. She was calling for me.

— Oh proud officers and men of many nations, the ones who were always slaughtered by those monsters were you, the people. The places that those monsters always pillaged were the fields cultivated

by you, the people. As the ones those monsters always stepped on were our fathers and mothers, every time we attempted to live peacefully those monsters cruelly trampled on our lives.

— Now a devil speaks to you. They claimed that they themselves have never threatened the people. I ask you all. Is that true?

The surroundings were still.

The atmosphere that was heated up by the speech given by Farnese earlier had settled down. The enemy forces that Farnese separated into peasants and nobles were once again embraced as one by Elizabeth, and the Imperial Princess started calling out each army that was gathered together.

— Boeotians. I remember. 400 years ago, on the rocky plains of Aulis, you desperately protected one of humanity's lines of defense with your lives, combatting against thirty thousand monsters for more than three days. The great prince that led you, Peneleos, rests underneath the hill alongside your brethren.

— Tribe of Minyans. I remember. 300 years ago, at the region of doves, Thisvi, although a monster from the netherworld was approaching, you were able to protect your city with merely 400 men. Regardless of the city's authority, the aristocrats, the citizens, and the slaves, you all became one and retaliated together. Humankind shall never forget your struggle.

— People of Aspledon. who could possibly forget the legendary battle that you all displayed 150 years ago!?

The moment she said that line, a single group cheered. The tribe known as Aspledon had given a fervent response.

—— Hurrah for Aspledon! Hurrah for Aspledon!

It was from that moment on. Elizabeth's naming was no longer a simple role call, but it was now a massive echo that shook the human army. Each time the Imperial Princess called out to a tribe or a city, the soldiers who were dispatched from those places would shake their flags fiercely and cheer.

—— Locrians, the people who lived while cultivating the water from the honorable River of Cephissus! I remember. 200 years ago, you all beheaded no less than 2 dragons in Euboea. Even the Goddesses of Heaven must have been moved by your achievement!

—— Locris! Locris! Locris!

Thud... Thud..., the soldiers from a single army started slamming the butts of their spears against the ground. They were shouting while holding pride towards their homeland. They were most likely not ordered to do so, but the drummers lifted their drumsticks and started to pound heavily on their drums, which were made from cowhide. Bang..... Bang..... While the earth shook because of the roars, the air trembled due to the drums. Between the shaking and trembling, Elizabeth's voice was free.

—— People of Abantes! People of Alpheus! Your glorious battle is still engraved onto each and every stone wall of your stronghold. When I was six-years-old, while brushing my boundlessly young hand over the engraved names on those walls, I made a resolution. That I will remember the names of the brave men written here on these walls forever. Therefore, I shall call out to your ancestors. Adrastus, Menestheus, Elephenor, Styra, Opoüs, Scarphe, Augeae,

Tarphes———.

She had truly memorized all of the names and were calling them out one at a time. Her voice slowly became louder and louder. The shaking and trembling of the soldiers followed after her voice and rose up steeply.

Once the number of names she called out had reached over 20, the soldiers cheered, once the number of names she shouted out had reached over 30, the soldiers threw up their hats, and once the number of names she cried out had finally reached over 50, the entire army of humans had become one and were shouting together.

Aah.

—— Oh, mankind!

How beautiful, Elizabeth.

One piece at a time, you embroidered together the humankind that I had broken into fragments. If my speech was sharp and had sliced them apart, then you had applied glue to each severed side and gently pulled them together. Although I had incited their rage and hatred, Elizabeth led them by using their pride towards their homeland and with the illusion that humankind was one.

No one wanted to call themselves a peasant. No matter who it was, people would want to believe that they were only **human**. Before being referred to as a peasant, they wanted to be referred to as a human. Before discussing hierarchy, they favored their homes, and before leaping into a divide, they loved harmony.

Elizabeth knew that.

She knew the fact that love could be instigated as easily as hatred could.

— You all, who were called by thousands of names yesterday, are here today as Habsburg, Francia, Brittany, Batavia, Teuton, Castile, Sardinia, Anatolia, Moscow, Kalmar, and Bernicia. However, we know. We know that we were originally one!

— At times, humankind became disunited. At times, humankind resented one another. However, regardless of all that, we were still one. Whenever those monsters pillaged our loveable land and slaughtered our families and comrades, we always became one and struggled together!

— Scorn and hatred were unable to stop us. Even the strong canines of the monsters were unable to separate us. That is so, it is because we are human. It is because we were born as humans, and until our final moments, we will more than gladly desire to die as just humans!

— As our struggle was not towards mankind itself.

— Our struggle was solely for the sake of mankind!

Finally, my telescope discovered Elizabeth. It was as if the silver haired Imperial Princess were looking this way from the very beginning since it felt as if our eyes met each other across this vast distance.

Elizabeth unsheathed her sword and raised it. It was a silver sword. A single ray of light made its way through a gap between the murky clouds and made the Imperial Princess' sword shine a bright silver. Every time Elizabeth shouted, the soldiers would respond by saying 'That's right'.

— Today, on this very day, mankind has once again reached a moment where everyone has become a single group. More than before, those monsters are stronger and more malicious. They know that they can only win if we were to be divided. You all must have heard well their false whispers. But how can one forget? The fact that humankind has always been one!

— That's right! That's right!

— For hundreds of years, those monsters put considerable efforts into separating us. But we remember. The fact that humankind has always been one!

— That's right! That's right!

— Today, they are once again trying to make us separate. However, we know. The fact that, on this day, humankind is surely one! As our ancestors have done so before, as we are doing so today, and as our descendants will do so tomorrow, humans will continue to forever exist as a single mankind!

— That's right! That's right!

Elizabeth placed her blade against her hand and cut her palm. The bandages were torn and crimson blood started to flow. She clenched the blood and shouted.

— I, Elizabeth of Habsburg, hereby vow. I shall always stand on the front lines throughout the defending war, which will unfold from this day forth. Whenever you wish to kneel before the ruthlessness of those monsters, I shall be directly behind you, supporting your backs. Whenever you are looking forward in despair, because of those monsters' cruelty, I shall be standing right there!

Elizabeth opened her fist. The blood that had gathered on her palm scattered all at once and flew throughout the air. As if trying to repay for every single drop of blood, the soldiers shouted. Finally, ignoring their homelands, their roars mixed together chaotically and could not be understood anymore.



— Today, some will die and some will survive. Here, in this place, the blood of mankind will be drunk greedily by the Bruno Plains. Leave it be. Let the plains drink as much blood as it desires! If our thirst is quenched by doing so, then so be it. Since today will be mankind's cruel carnival!

— Officers and men of many nations! The people, the descendants of your proud ancestors! Alongside me, will you prove to those malicious monsters once more that we are still humans!?

— That's right!

— Have you finished strengthening your resolves to remain in the history of blood once more!?

— That's right!

The horizon shook because of the roars. Flags were waving. The drummers continued to pound the cowhide boisterously. Like thunder that had no tempo or rhythm, the noise uttered by the human army of a hundred thousand soldiers shook the earth and the sky.

— For war!

— For war!

Following after, the soldiers chanted for war three or four more times. Elizabeth was able to wash the poison known as class strife, which I had spread throughout their army, clean. At the very least, it seems something like their fighting spirit falling apart will not happen today. How splendid. Surely, it was worthy of the girl who I had acknowledged to be my lifelong formidable enemy.

“.....”

Farnese was silent beside me. The delighted frivolous atmosphere, which she possessed immediately after her speech was over, had disappeared without a trace. She was merely staring hard at the sight of the human army cheering. I had heard from somewhere that the temperature of one's gaze was the same as their heart. If that was the case, then, in the end, Farnese's heart was mostly likely frozen like winter. I stroked Farnese's head.

“How was it? Are you still not worried?”

“.....For 2 months, this young lady had prepared for today's speech. If you include the time spent learning from Miss Lapis, then it is no less than half a year. That speech, this young lady, and Your Lordship's strike.”

“That is so.”

I nodded my head.

“That Imperial Princess had toppled our blow in merely 10 minutes. She most likely thought of countermeasures promptly after she heard our speech. She devised a speech in her head without any previous preparations whatsoever.”

Farnese, the girl, who you and I must face from now on, is that kind of monster. If we are unable to take the Imperial Princess' life, then in return, the Imperial Princess will take ours. As a result, the hero to have their name remain in history will be her. At most, the girl known as Farnese will be recorded as the failed revolutionary and defeated general.

With no emotion on her face, Farnese bit her bottom lip.

“.....Elizabeth. Elizabeth Atanaxia, Evatriae, von Habsburg.”

Farnese pronounced the name of the woman, who was going to become her sworn enemy, in detail. Farnese's voice was sanguinary.

Similar to the way she had pronounced it, it was as if she intended to slice up the Imperial Princess' body, in detail.

“This young lady cannot forgive her. The one who will become the owner of this age is none other than this young lady. For that sole purpose, this young lady became Your Lordship's vassal. How could this young lady possibly leave alone that sort of girl when she intends to obstruct this young lady's ambitions?”

“Mm.”

I was pleased by this girl's murderous intent. That's right. I wanted **this sort of reaction** . Because I wanted this kind of response, I threw away the other heroes of the future and chose Laura De Farnese.

No matter how radiant the opposition was, I needed that superciliousness that could consider something as a hindrance solely for the reason that that radiance was blocking their path.

A cruelty that didn't waver even the slightest amount when before the bombastic pretext of protecting mankind, a personality that is capable of killing the things that must be silently killed, and if the opposition cannot be killed, then someone who can make do by killing whatever else possible.

As Farnese was a supercilious and cruel girl, the Imperial Princess, Elizabeth, was nothing more than an unwelcomed guest that was interfering with her enjoyable and peaceful time. Farnese was a psychopath. That is why I chose this child instead of anyone else…….

There were many people who would say it was lonely when the wind blew. There were numerous people who would leave after saying they have to go somewhere whenever the wind blew. However, child, who is as loveable as my younger sister, since the wind has blown, you and I are people who demand the flags to be raised. Even if Elizabeth were a storm that was similar to a calamity, to us, that was nothing more than a signal to raise our banners.

“Lord.”

Farnese looked up at me. A faint tint of hatred could be seen in the pupils of this child who rarely displayed any emotions. It almost felt as if she were a child who just had her playground invaded and was pestering her father about it.

“This young lady shall kill that woman. Please allow this young lady to do so.”

“Not yet.”

I shook my head. Farnese furrowed her brow.

“Why not? Did Your Lordship not bring this young lady from the slave market in order to kill that woman? Your Lordship was right. This young lady understands now, as well. The fact that a woman like that cannot be killed by just anyone. However, if it is this young lady, then she will certainly be able to kill her.”

“Be patient. The time has yet to come.”

I slowly persuaded my best pupil. Although the curtains of the play have risen and the theatricals have begun, there were still many crises to overcome. In order to kill Macbeth, one must arrive at the fourth act first.

“Although taking the life of a single individual is a small task, it is something that I must do personally. There are thousands of humans we must kill, tens of thousands. How do you expect to properly subdue Elizabeth when we are surrounded by people that we must kill?”

“Your words are ambiguous, Lord. Please tell this young lady your true meaning.”

“I am saying that it is unwieldy to face the opponent in the front while leaving aside the enemy that is in the back.”

I smiled.

“We have an alliance with Barbatos’ Plains Faction, but that relationship is strictly limited to one where we merely use one another. Just because the benefit is firm, does not mean that even the trust is adamant. Moreover, the head that is leading the greatest faction in the demon continent, the Mountain Faction, is Paimon. That fellow is hostile towards us.”

Farnese narrowed her eyes.

“This young lady understands. It seems we must get rid of the bothersome things in the rear first. Since we would most likely have an upset stomach if we get too greedy, it would be best to rip them apart one bite at a time.”

“Bingo. That is how a lion hunts a deer.”

I lightly pulled on Farnese’s cheek. This was a physical contact which contained the meaning of praise. Albeit, Farnese did not like it and was groaning, ‘Uuuh’.

“Who do you plan on going for first?”

“Paimon is first.”

I answered immediately.

I had a deep ill-fated relationship with Paimon, anyway. From the very beginning, when I had aimed for the cure of the disease and had instantly accumulated great wealth, Paimon was vigilant towards me. Perhaps I should say that she was excessively vigilant. She had a lot of hostility piled up towards a dangerous son of a bitch like me, after all. To this very day, I cannot recall leaving alone even **a single person** who dared to hinder my life. Fortunately, the gift that the Imperial Princess Elizabeth had given to me was resting in my coat pocket. A pocket watch. Memoria Artifact. The very item which contained the scene where I had to burn down a slave market in order to appoint Farnese.

Originally, Humbaba was the one who had recorded with this object, and she had sold it to Paimon. That pocket watch was in the Imperial Princess Elizabeth's hands. It meant that it went from Humbaba to Paimon, and from Paimon to Elizabeth. What does this mean.....?

The answer was actually simple.

“Paimon sold information about myself to the Empire.”

“.....”

“She most likely informed the Empire that I was the true culprit behind the start of this war in secret. She passed on my personal information while she was at it. Furthermore, of all people, it had to be the Imperial Princess Elizabeth..... An underhanded betrayer.”

I chuckled slightly.

“Was she called a whore who would sell her body to peddlers? Barbatos' words were indeed correct. In order to stop me, Paimon, that woman, sold not only her body but her soul as well. It is now her turn to pay the price drastically.

Without a doubt, I had done my utmost. Paimon, even if your side was the one to have attacked first, I treated you with courtesy. However, you not only interfered with every single thing I did, but your act of betrayal has been revealed, as well. You have clearly crossed the boundary.

Earlier, since the area behind us was a bit noisy, I had come down from the boulder. I discovered that Barbatos and Paimon were quarreling. I had no idea what was going on but Paimon had pointed towards me and declared **‘That man is mine from now on’**. Due to that, a small fuss had occurred..... Paimon most likely realized that her betrayal had been revealed. I am not sure how she figured it out, but she has a stifling information network. She knew that she was in peril since her disclosure was revealed, and that was why she had urgently tried to win me over by saying ‘Join my faction’.

How laughable.

It's too late, Paimon.

If you were afraid of having your betrayal discovered, then you should not have committed it in the first place. If you had already carried out the betrayal, then you should have done whatever you could in order to not allow me to catch wind of it until the very end. If you were the former, then you would have been a kind person, and if you were the latter, then you would have been a sensible person. However, you were neither this or that. You were both unkind and idiotic. I am not foolish enough to let that sort of prey go…….

Farnese spoke in a low voice.

“Lord, this young lady is your sword. This blade will only be swung in the places that Your Lordship commands for it to be swung. However, is that fine? There are enemies in our front and a backstabber in our rear. Although people say that one must punish the betrayer before facing the enemy, similar to that reasoning, a logic where one must face the enemy forces before punishing the traitor, is also established. This is a formidable situation.”

I nodded my head. That was a good point. Indeed, it was worthwhile for Lapis and myself to invest our time in personally tutoring this girl. They say that a sparrow near a school can sing the primer, and that seemed to be the case.[\[1\]](#)

“It is fine. I have something in mind in regards to that. Are we not holding out as Barbatos’ allies? Even to Barbatos, Paimon is an annoying political rival. If we throw out grounds to purge Paimon, then Barbatos will obviously dash in with no reluctance whatsoever.”

“Mm. Surely.”

“Lapis should have started to slowly pull in the required chessman by now……. In any case, Farnese, until we deal with the betrayer, do not thoughtlessly face against Elizabeth. Even if you meet her

coincidentally on the front line, avoid her peacefully. Do you understand? Absolutely do not fight her. This is an order to absolutely not fight her.”

“.....”

“Oho? Look here. I see there is no response. Are you going against my order already just because you gave one speech well? If you have been given an order, then you should acknowledge it. What are you showing off for?”

“.....I understand, Lord. I heard you well.”

Farnese pouted. It seems she fairly wanted to kill the Imperial Princess Elizabeth. I could not help but laugh. What a cute child.

Of course, it was not something that I was incapable of understanding. Before I fell into this world, I considered my father to be my archenemy and would constantly wish I could take his life a day sooner. With my index finger and thumb, I grabbed Farnese’s cheek and pulled on it.

“Sheesh, this repulsive thing. I live because of you, because of you.”

“.....Uuuu, guh.”

Farnese wriggled her arms.

“Let go, Lord. Generally, Your Lordship touches this young lady’s body without much thought too much. Please show some manners when interacting with a lady.”

“You may talk about being a lady once you have actually become one first. At the very least, I will consider changing my attitude towards you once your chest has become a bit bigger.”

“If Your Lordship is going to quibble over the smallness of chests, then is there not that much of a difference between Miss Lapis and this young lady?”

“Lapis is an exception.”

I coolly discarded her argument.

“Regardless of the situation, Lapis has the authority to acquire such a special exception. If you have any complaints, then go and become as smart and as pretty as Lapis, you gum scab. Of course, even if a hundred years flow by, it is most likely impossible for you to achieve such a feat.”

“Your Lordship really favors Miss Lapis…….”

“Is it not obvious when she is the sole person with the same heart as I?”

Lapis is my love.

Lapis is my sun.

No matter what anyone says, this was an evident truth that was as clear as the law of physics.

Like that, we, lord and vassal, came down from the boulder while taunting one another. At the bottom of the boulder, including Barbatos, Paimon, and the other Demon Lords who were commanders of an army corps, there were around 30 Demon Lords waiting for us. Since the speech from our side and the enemy side was over, the only thing that really remained now was war.

Among them, Barbatos was leaning back on a chair and waving her hand.

“Hey, self-proclaimed Mister Genius. Good job.”

“All I have done is carry out the sacred task.”

I bowed. Although in private, Barbatos and I were sex friends who spoke informally to one another, we were currently in the presence of others. Furthermore, we were within a military where the regulation

of command and discipline was stern. It was obvious that I, who was rank 71st, would speak formally to Barbatos, who was rank 8th.

That was fine. Something like our relationship falling apart because I talked formally could not possibly happen. It was not simply because we had a friendly relationship when in private, but because Barbatos and I were allied politically. We have been allied until now, and we will most likely continue to be so for a while longer. Until we have defeated our joint enemy, Demon Lord Paimon, our trust was firm. It was fine to be certain of this.

“Sacred task. Sacred task, is it……?”

Barbatos smirked and crossed her white legs.

“That’s right. We gave you a sacred task, didn’t we? Dantalian, we passed onto you, the kid who was still lingering at the very bottom of the ranks of Demon Lords, the right to give the opening speech of the Crescent Alliance that was joining together for the first time in no less than 200 years. Not to anyone else, we gave it to you while considering your contributions to our army during this war.”

“…….”

I stopped walking.

Barbatos was all smiles like usual. However, the atmosphere emanating from the Demon Lords of the Plains Faction, who were standing around her, was threatening. I instinctively made Farnese stand behind me.

The air felt menacing.

To be exact, Barbatos’ eyes did.

A rage which even laughter could not hide was lingering in her eyes.

“Huh? Why are you hiding her? Let’s see her face. You gave to her

the right of speech which we specifically gifted to you, right? On your own discretion, without consulting us. I wanted to see how great of a girl she is since she was able to make our Mr. Dantalian give all of his guts and organs to her.”

“.....Miss Barbatos.”

“Her Excellency, Barbatos.”

She spoke coldly.

“Add ‘Her Excellency’, you dimwit.”

Barbatos’ pupils were cold. I couldn’t find even a single ounce of affection towards me within her gaze. The temperature of one’s eyes is the same as their heart, was it? If those words were true, then this was most likely Barbatos’ true temper.

“I’m one of the corps commanders that leads the Crescent Alliance of a hundred thousand soldiers. What? Did you look down on me since I slept with you all the time?”

“.....”

“Did you think you could do whatever you wanted from now on just because you saved my troops when they were in danger once? Oh dear, Dantalian. You did quite the good job for sending out a human child as the representative of us demons. Did you think I’d praise you like this?”

Barbatos’ smile thickened.

“Dig out your ear holes and listen well, Dantalian, since I’m going to be naming off the crimes you’ve committed thanks to this single speech of yours. First, since you put forward some kid, who’s still wet behind the ears, as the substitute of us great demons, that’s racial treason.”

Barbatos raised her middle finger on her left hand.

“Since you had the gall to make a mess out of our military discipline when war is going to be upon us soon, that’s insubordination while also in the presence of the enemy. Since it wasn’t you alone who bullshitted, but you had worked together with the witches, who you appointed as your royal guards, to concoct the speech, that’s group mutiny.”

Following her ring finger on her left hand, Barbatos raised her middle finger on her right hand, as well.

“Since the Demon Lord, who’s on the lowest seat of the army, dared to informally commit lese majesty on the field of battle where the 12 holy gods will be watching over us, you’ve even committed blasphemy. Wow, Dantalian. Look at this. How many is this? Even if you only count the number of lese majesties, there’s four. Even if we sever your neck, we’d have to do it 4 times. That’s a rather crappy feeling, isn’t it?”

“Your Excellency, Barbatos.”

“Yeah, I know. The fact that you see this military as a playground where you can dick around however you want. Since I overindulged you all the time, nothing illuminates in my eye sockets now. Nonetheless, you fucker, life isn’t that easy.”

I wasn’t given even a single opportunity to give an excuse.

Barbatos snapped her finger.

“Grab that bastard.”

And the shadow moved.



It was similar to that of a beast’s mouth.

A pitch black liquid shot forth from Barbatos' shadow, the dark mass then bared its fangs and rushed towards me. Each and every one of its numerous teeth was as thick as a person's forearm. Gyaaaaaak———the air screamed as it was torn. It was instantaneous. The beast of shadow grew in mass like a tsunami and it felt as if it were going to swallow me whole soon.

“.....!?”

I wonder if my brain perceived that I was in danger. My surroundings started to move at a speed clearly slower than normal. Somewhere. I had to move somewhere and avoid it. Even if I were uncertain about what kind of liquid that black tsunami was made from, it was evident that it was not something as adorable as H₂O.

Up down left right. My eyes searched for a side where the shadow had even the slightest bit of less mass. It was at the moment I was about to escape to my right, I ended up realizing a single fact.

Farnese.

Farnese was standing behind me.

If I move from my position, then the shadow will promptly swallow her.

My head heated up and tried to distinguish my priorities. My safety or Farnese's safety. My consciousness determined which one had the higher priority.

‘Abandon her.’

The very edge of my consciousness announced. I was more important than Farnese. There was no value in even considering this. However, a more elaborate and complex judgment refuted a step late.

‘Do the complete opposite. Protect Farnese and cover her.’

‘Nonsense.’

‘There’s no way that Barbatos would kill me abruptly. There’s no merit for Barbatos to do so. At most, all she’d do is injure me. But Farnese was different. In Barbatos’ position, it didn’t matter whether she killed Farnese as much as she wanted to or not. Therefore, Farnese will die if you move away right now.’

‘And?’

‘And.’

And Farnese is Lapis and my child.

“.....”

End of judgment.

There were no more arguments. At that point, my consciousness ended the calculations there.

I stopped my movement that was about to make my body dodge to the right. As my realization was a bit late, my body moved as hastily as it was delayed. I turned around just like that and embraced Farnese. Since I hugged Farnese with my entire body, I was able to barely cover her completely. The small Farnese squirmed within my embrace.

“Lo…….”

Before she could even finish saying ‘Lord’.

I could sense the shadow of the beast sweeping over us in the air. With the breath, which Farnese let out, as the final trigger, our surroundings had returned to its normal pace. Now the method to dodge the attack was gone.

It couldn’t be helped. Whenever danger approached, I was someone

who acted according to his priorities. I have been like this since a young age.

What can I do? I can only hope that Barbatos will go a bit easy on me. I hugged Farnese tighter and closed my eyes.

———In that instant, something similar to a breeze brushed against my cheek.

It seemed as if the shadow of the beast, that was going to enshroud us soon, had stopped somewhere in mid-air, and there were no more signs of something else approaching us. When I cautiously raised my gaze, I could see 7 black mantles swaying before me.

7 cone hats.

7 staves.

“Ahahah.”

My royal guards.

The Berbere Sisters.

“You can’t do that, you can’t do that. It’d be troubling for the likes of us if our one and only master were to be injuuured.”

The group of witches, whom Humbaba was the head of, were raising their staves and fluttering the black mantles which I had gifted to them a while back.

The shadow beast was blocked by the staves and could not approach any further. It merely squirmed around creepily and was doing whatever it could to find another path by wriggling here and there. Every time it did so, the witches changed the direction of their staves slightly and obstructed the beast.

Grrrrrrrg, grrrk———a frustrated snarl flowed out from the beast’s maw. Without being fazed by it, Humbaba laughed.

“What’s this? Agilis’ demon? Ahahah? This is really an ancient familiar. I think it’s been around 300 years since I’ve last seen one. Should I say that’s indeed Her Highness Barbatos for you? It’s not only high-toned for the likes of us but since even the familiar’s grub is extraordinary as well, respect forms naturally in low people like us.”

“.....”

Barbatos furrowed her brow.

“These girls. How dare you not know your place and.”

“Yeess, we interfered while not knowing our place. We apologiize. Although the likes of us are the lowest of the low, we have a fatal disease where we’ll die if we’re unable to protect His Highness, Dantalian. By nature, this is a bullshit-like incurable disease, but weren’t the likes of us already infamous for being similar to bullshit? We hope that a greater being, such as Your Highness, is able to understand magnanimously.”

Humbaba laughed. The moment she did so, the other witches giggled as well.

As the confrontation lasted longer, more witches affiliated to my army started to gather slowly. Before I knew it, my Royal Guard of 20 witches was surrounding me without leaving a single gap.

“Ah, referentially, although the young ones these days are completely in the dark, us lowly ones know how to dispose of things like this, you know? Although we can eradicate it immediately, we’re oonly waiting patiently because of our respect towards Your Highness.”

Grrrrk..... the shadow beast whimpered. Some sort of black liquid was dropping onto the ground.

The beast had shrunk down until it was unable to budge an inch and quivered as if it were asking its master what it should do now.

“Tsk.”

Barbatos clicked her tongue. The moment she snapped her fingers, the beast fell apart instantly. The black liquid seeped into the earth and disappeared like that.

“I left these things, which I should have killed before, alive because the sight of them groveling around was pitiful……. It’s impressive, Dantalian. Seriously impressive. Really, when you go insane it seems you go completely nuts as a group.”

Barbatos spat on the ground.

“Just how did you sweet-talk those decomposed maggots of souls to be able to make them as docile as pets? Hm? Your fiancée is a half-blood, your acting general is a human bitch, and your royal guards are witches, right? Looking at the medals attached to their heads, they’re all Quadriphyllouses, as well? Wow. You’re having all sorts of fun. You, do you know how many times those bitches had have to spread their asses for Demon Lords in order to get a Quadriphyllous? Fuuuck. Oi, those bitches’ assholes are so worn out that I can hear them flapping loosely from here.”

Humbaba bobbed her head in agreement.

“Ahah. Her Majesty’s graceful words are quite right, master. In truth, we’re sad that we rank second in the demon continent for having loose rears. However, do not worry! We’ve vowed that, from this year forth, and until the day we die, we’ll spread our bottom holes for our master and our master only, after all! This is something to be slightly moved by.”

Barbatos grit her teeth.

“Damn witches. Since those bitches are so fucking perverted, they receive no damage even if you swear at them…….”

Mm.

That's something I keenly agreed to.

I let out a sigh and spoke to Humbaba.

"Thank you. It seems I am in debt to you now."

"Ahah, what kind of debt is that supposed to be? Royal guards are something you have appointed in order to use them in times like this. But, if Your Highness really does feel grateful towards us, then please bestow upon us Your Highness' royal grace later today."

These girls don't change even in a situation like this.

.....Now then, I was able to get past the immediate crisis for now. What should I do from this point on? First, there was a need to find out why Barbatos was behaving so aggressively.

Ravens flew around and then perched on top of the witches' hats and staves. The birds cawed. As witches were peasants so they could not dare make any complaints towards Barbatos, it felt as if the ravens were rebelling against Barbatos in their stead. Furthermore, the witches, whose bodies were completely concealed by their black mantles, appeared as if they were one in body and soul with the ravens. Over the cone hats and ravens, Barbatos shouted loudly.

"Hey, Dantalian! Are you really going to do this to me? Huh? Are we going to fucking slap each other and break up like this? Just counting the crimes you've committed now, fuck, racial treason, insubordination before the enemy, group mutiny, and even heresy! No one can complain if I rip your head off and check the color of your intestines right now! Offer that human girl over there to us and end it obediently while I'm still asking nicely!"

"....."

Was that it?

I understood why Barbatos was behaving ruder than necessary. By making Farnese bear the responsibilities excessively, Barbatos wanted

to lessen the total amount of blame that came around to me. In Barbatos' perspective, she was doing that for my sake. This was Barbatos' own way of showing consideration, so to speak.

However.

“My apologies, Your Excellency, Barbatos.”

I lowered my head.

I appreciate your sentiment, but I have to refuse.

“Even if this child is a part of the human race, she is a child that I have decided to raise and she is a vassal that I am responsible for. As I was the one to have appointed this child as my acting general, I am also the one to have sent her out to give the speech. If General Farnese made a mistake, then that is my mistake, and if there is something which General Farnese must take responsibility for, then it is a weight that solely I must bear.”

“.....Lord.”

Farnese, who was being held within my arms, was looking straight up at me. I wonder if she was worried. I was so taken aback that I almost snorted out loud.

My father and I were different.

I didn't shoulder people if I were incapable of taking responsibility for them from the start, and if I did take them in, then I would make sure to bear the burden until the very end.

Of course, if I take all of the blame instead of Farnese, then there will be a slight set back in my plan to remove Paimon. Nevertheless, I am an outstanding genius. I have a plan. I also have a card up my sleeve. If anything, a small obstacle will only make it more enjoyable for me.

With my right arm, I patted Farnese's back. You are much too

young to be worrying about my safety, kid. If you are a child, then behave like one and obediently be protected by an adult.

“.....”

Farnese nodded her head slightly. She slowly rested her head against my chest. Even if we were not connected by blood or something else, the daughter that Lapis and I had decided to shoulder together depended on me like that.

That sight most likely displeased her. Barbatos spat out sharply.

“Haa, so what? Are you going to wriggle away like a serpent, without bearing any responsibility whatsoever, even though you went against military discipline right before my eyes? Why don’t you just piss in my eyes instead, Dantalian? Since I don’t want to witness military discipline falling apart even if I die.”

I shook my head.

“Even I know well how much emphasis Your Excellency puts on military regulations. I do not have the slightest intention to do something like avoiding my responsibility. I shall shoulder General Farnese’s wrongdoings as well. Your Excellency, please execute me.”

“What?”

“I have requested for my own execution.”

I calmly looked around my surroundings. The atmosphere of the surrounding was rigid. For some reason, it seems Paimon was looking this way with a face that appeared as if she were concerned about something. Without immediately contemplating on what the meaning behind that expression was, I declared.

“Rank 71st, Demon Lord Dantalian. I shall renounce my authority as a Demon Lord and put myself on military trial here.”

▯ **Demon Lord of Benevolence, Rank 9th, Paimon**
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 3
Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance

“Rank 71st, Demon Lord Dantalian. I shall renounce my authority as a Demon Lord and put myself on military trial here.”

The moment Dantalian uttered those words, the surrounding froze. It was the same for this lady as well. To request for one’s own execution through military trial, this is unprecedented. This……. This, goes beyond bounds.

Barbatos gazed at Dantalian abstractedly.

“A lord’s words are heavy. Words once spoken can never be taken back, Dantalian. This is a word of advice as your intimate friend and senior. I’m giving you a chance to change the words you said just now for the last time.”

“My sincerest apologies, Your Excellency, but I do not intend to alter my words. General Farnese is a child that this one loves. I would rather die than pass onto this child the burden.”

“…….”

Barbatos’ face became void of emotions.

……Originally, in order to punish a Demon Lord, the confirmation of the crime and the severity of the punishment must be formally decided during a Walpurgis Night. In other words, a Demon Lord can only be punished during a Walpurgis Night. As every Demon Lord has the authority to refuse any other type of trial, this was one of the Demon Lords’ privileges. If this were not the case, then there was the danger of high ranking Demon Lords using the pretext of war to purge lower ranking Demon Lords during a military trial.

However, Dantalian had renounced his authority as a Demon Lord just now. That means he has fallen into a status where he is legally capable of being submitted to a military trial.

Racial treason, insubordination in the face of the enemy, group mutiny, and blasphemy, these were the names of the offenses that Dantalian had committed now…… each and every one of these were grave crimes. Among those, a normal soldier would be executed if they committed even one. But to have committed 4 lese majesties……. In the case that the military trial is carried out just like this, then Dantalian cannot avoid his execution.

“I definitely gave you the opportunity. Several times, at that.”

“And I have expressed myself clearly, Your Excellency.”

“You have no regrets, right?”

“Yes, that is correct. I am, at all times, only concerned about Your Excellency, Barbatos’ safety and honor.”

“Haaa.”

Barbatos let out a sigh. Even she clearly knew what the results would be if a military trial were to be held. Because she knew so, she most likely intended to cover up this incident by merely whipping Dantalian a bit.

Even that seemed to have weighed upon Barbatos’ mind since she was about to go as far as to make that human girl take the majority of the responsibility instead of Dantalian. The minimum amount of blame to Dantalian. A punishment that is nothing more than mere formality would have fallen upon him. Even Dantalian should not be unaware of this. So why?

“Okay. Let’s open it, a military trial or whatever. As it happens, all the corps commanders are here as well. Isn’t that great? I, Barbatos, as the rank 8th and the leader of the Plains Faction, as the one who boasts immortality, shall hold Demon Lord Dantalian’s court

martial.”

The ones in charge of military trials are usually the highest ranking person in one’s corps.

Since Dantalian is not affiliated with any other Demon Lords and had autonomously hired a troop of mercenaries, in this situation, the highest ranking person responsible for his corps are the military commanders. Thus, Barbatos, Marbas, and this lady. Just in time, everyone was gathered here before the outbreak of war…….

“Old man Marbas. Voice your intention to participate in the trial.”

“Mm.”

The magnate of the Neutral Faction and the commander of the second army. Rank 5th, Demon Lord Marbas nodded his head slowly…….

“I acknowledge my participation in this trial.”

His expression was mixed. That man has a debt towards Dantalian.

Due to the loss of Marbas’ previous battle, there was a high possibility that the expedition of the Crescent Alliance itself would have broken down in failure in that moment. No, if Dantalian had not acquired victory, then without a doubt the expedition would have failed. He was feeling a millstone around his neck because of that.

If possible, he would have covered up Dantalian’s crimes…… a military trial was no good. This was something that was directly connected with morale. There was absolutely no significance in a military trial that pardoned high treason. For Marbas, who puts so much emphasis on legislations and regulations, it would be nearly impossible for him to raise Dantalian’s hand during a trial. No matter how much he tries, the best he could possibly do is throw in a blank ballot.

……And.

That, is the same for this lady, as well.

Regardless of whether Dantalian is the first person this lady has ever met in her life with the same ideology as her, regardless of whether it is this lady's first time meeting someone who has the same mentality as her, kept in their bosom, this lady is currently the commander of an army of 30,000. This lady is standing in a position where she must worry about the morale of 30,000 officers and men. Something like throwing in a dissenting vote while other people are watching, this lady cannot do such a thing.

Because this lady is a person in charge.

Because that is the duty of a commander who leads an army.

“.....”

What does this lady have to do?

What does this lady have to do in order to naturally get past the military trial without having to give a dissenting vote?

If it were not a military trial, then preserving Dantalian's life is possible. In the end, every issue is settled through a vote during a Walpurgis Night. In other words, it was purely a fight of numbers.

As the head of the Mountain Faction, this lady can move 20 votes. If Barbatos were to utilize the 15 votes from the Plains Faction here, then even with that, this lady already has the majority. That is right. If it were not a military trial. If we can just pass this moment.....

“Oi, whore. Voice your intention to participate in the trial.”

.....

.....

“What? Are you ignoring me right now? Whore. Hello? Miss Whore whose mind is vast because her hole is ragged. Bitch, despite your

looks you're still an army commander, you know? If you're aware then say that you'll participate in…….”

Okay.

If it is this, then it might be possible.

Although it is dangerous. Although it is an incomparably-dangerous gamble.

If it is this lady, then she can do it.

Since jumping into a gamble is this lady's specialty.

This lady straightened her mind and raised her feather fan to hide her lips. The posture that this lady always assumes. By covering half of the face, only half of this lady is revealed. This is the most comfortable.

This lady spoke while staring at Barbatos.

“No. This lady will not voice her participation.”

———A stillness fell over the surrounding.

Starting from Barbatos, all of the Demon Lords gazed at this lady as if they were wondering whether they had heard wrong just now.

It was obvious. Until now, Dantalian and this lady had established an opposing relationship with one another for every single action we took. It may not be the case for Barbatos or Marbas, but everyone most likely never expected that this lady would be the one to exercise her veto.

That was exactly the reason.

Compared to the others, since this lady was a political rival who stood out the most when trying to get rid of Dantalian, that was why this plan, which this lady had thought up of, was valid.

“.....Fuck, what is it now? Hey, did all of you guys get high today just so you could play a joke on me? The bastard known as my lover fucked up on his own and is now requesting for his own court martial, and now that whore over there is refusing for some fucking reason. Did you two go off somewhere and fuck while I wasn’t watching?”

“Please do not assume that everyone in the world is as vulgar as you. Of course, if they are born lacking the same amount of intelligence like you did, then there is nothing else that can be said.”

This lady showed a thin smile. A vein popped in Barbatos’ forehead, but that did not matter. I taunted her on purpose, after all.

“This lady has told you before, have I not? Barbatos, that man is no longer your toy and is now mine. This lady has the plan to pull Dantalian into the Mountain Faction. There is no way that this lady would agree to such a trial when that is the case.”

“Aaang?”

“Be it a military trial or something else, do it yourself. However, do you know this, Barbatos? Although Dantalian sending out a human girl as a substitute is certainly a lese majesty, you are the one who had selected that Dantalian to be the orator of our Crescent Alliance.”

“.....”

Barbatos’ face instantly became cold.

“So what? What are you trying to babble?”

“Who knows? This lady is simply curious. Since you are the one to have put forward Dantalian, who is nothing more than rank 71st, surely could something like you instructing him on what to say not

have happened?”

This lady smiled.

The more this lady mixed a hint of coquette laughter into her voice, the colder the surrounding mood became. A couple of people at a time, the other Demon Lords should have begun to catch on to what this lady meant by those words.

“Barbatos, this lady has suspicions. If Dantalian had committed a mistake, then in the first place, is that not your responsibility? You pushed Dantalian forward as the war negotiator, and you were the one who selected Dantalian to be the orator. If perhaps, Dantalian had made a mistake merely because he was thoughtless, then it is your responsibility for not having realized Dantalian’s incompetence. Moreover, if perhaps, Dantalian had made a mistake on purpose…….”

Yes.

That is right.

“Then are you not the criminal who had committed the lese majesty?”

Attack Barbatos instead of Dantalian.

This was this lady’s stratagem.

A complete silence swept over the surroundings now. No one dared to open their mouths rashly. People were looking this way with their faces dyed with shock.

Just now, what this lady had done was no different to having made a declaration of war towards Barbatos who was a fellow army commander. Although all this lady has done is raise a suspicion, it is that suspicion that can end one’s life in politics.

Barbatos stared at this lady for a long time without uttering a single word. There was no hostility or rage. Only a tranquil sneer was

permeating through her.

“.....Hmm. I did find it strange when a bitch like you suddenly wanted to take Dantalian away from me. I assumed that you were acting on impulse while leaving yourself to those stupid thoughts of yours again, but surely. You’re really trying to start an all-or-nothing battle with me during this war?”

“Oh dear. That is an exaggerated interpretation, Barbatos. The only thing this lady has said is that she was curious. You appointed Dantalian as the orator, and then you attacked him immediately after the actual speech was over? No matter how you look at it, it is not a fair treatment.”

“What? Do you think I sent Dantalian to give the speech on purpose just so I could get rid of him after? You should just accuse me of having incited everything from start to finish while you’re at it.”

“Who knows? This lady has never said anything with certainty. This lady simply wishes to voice her objection towards handling this military trial with more haste than caution. There is the possibility that Dantalian may become an important witness, after all. Yes, and if possible, while also pulling him into this lady’s faction.”

“.....”

A moment of silence.

“Aha, puhahah—, puhahahahah—!”

Barbatos suddenly burst into laughter.

People were taken aback and glanced at one another. Although she was facing a declaration of war, far from being enraged, she was laughing her head off. To them, this is most likely a bewildering sight.

However, this lady knows. Barbatos has always been that kind of woman. A personage who struck fear into people by not laughing

when she should, and laughing when she should not.

Barbatos laughed to the point where tears formed in the corner of her eyes.

“Yeah, mhm. That’s right. You’re that sort of bitch, Paimon. You were always a sly bitch. You go around pretending to be a goody two-shoes and pick on things that are the size of a rat’s tail. Last time, you put forward your suspicion that I created the Black Death, and now you’re really suggesting that I instigated racial treason? Iyaaaah. Bitches like you are really fucking impressive bitches. Me! Yeah, I admit it! I admit it! The fact that you’re quite the motherfucker, Paimon!”

“.....”

“Then fuck, what do you want to do? As you can see, the military trial is out of the question now. Should we call over those Demon Lords who’re shitting about in the back, hmm? Want to just hold a Walpurgis Night here? Whether it’d be appropriate if I die or not since I committed high treason? Or should I just shoulder the suspicion and be like, Oh, Miss Paimon, something like that never happened, let us figure this out later, and explain it to you like this?”

Barbatos spat on the floor.

“Ha, you fucker. You shitty fucking whore. You’re really doing a good job when the enemy is right in front of us. This Crescent Alliance expedition is over as well, it’s over. In any case, you’re a bitch whose one ability to screw up an entire household is just baffling.”

The Demon Lords affiliated to the Plains Faction were standing in a line past Barbatos. They were all letting out a murderous intent while glaring in this direction. It was the same for this side as well, this lady’s comrades were going against that murderous intent with their snarling intimidation. With this, the Crescent Alliance instantly split into two sides. The Demon Lords of the Neutral Faction were trying their best to calm everyone down, but this was beyond their capabilities.

Amidst the army that was swept in chaos.

“.....”

Dantalian was standing and gazing at this lady.

His eyes were as pitch black as the bottom of a well. It was difficult for this lady to guess what thoughts and emotions lingered underneath those eyes. It felt as if he were contemplating something or trying to measure this lady's intentions. Towards that Dantalian, Barbatos spoke.

“Dantalian.”

“.....Yes, Your Excellency.”

“I'm suspending your trial for an indefinite period of time. I'll prepare a prison cell, so stay there. We'll discuss your crimes properly once the situation has settled down.”

Dantalian nodded his head.

“Understood. However, excluding myself, I request that you are tolerant towards the rest of my vassals. Throughout the winter, my vassals recruited mercenaries and were remarkably able to build up a force of 7,000. They will without a doubt not be useless when fighting in a battle against the humans.”

“Yeah, yeah. Do what you want.”

Barbatos then led her Plains Faction group down the rocky hill. From this point on, the Plains Faction will break away from the united front and conduct war unilaterally. Barbatos' action had implicitly displayed such intentions.

Marbas let out a sigh.

“Are we going to be torn apart before the war has even begun? Oh, Paimon. Is this truly the meaning of your goal? I am starting to

slowly understand you less.”

“.....Marbas.”

“I shall be the one to undertake Dantalian’s supervision. With what has unfolded just now, I cannot trust you and Barbatos to manage the new inductee. It would be good if the surveillance of the prison is done by a different faction each day. Nonetheless, if this Crescent Alliance fails as well, then how many times would that make it.....?”

Marbas gently stared out into an empty space. For a moment, this lady’s heart felt numb because of the veteran’s eyes which were filled with melancholy.

Marbas most likely came out on this expedition with the sincere intention of succeeding this Crescent Alliance. Even if it were an unavoidable choice, this lady had ignored Marbas’ intent. This lady’s head fell down on its own.....

Without leaving any more words, Marbas left while leading the Neutral Faction. The only ones left on the hill now were the members of the Mountain Faction, including this lady. The child, who has one of the highest ranks in the Mountain Faction, second to this lady, Sitri, approached and spoke out. Sitri had a face filled with excitement.

“Big Sis Paimon, you were amazing! Iyaah. Those Plains Faction bastards. The sight of them glaring at us because of your sudden attack was well worth seeing. At any rate, those guys, who only have shit in their heads, were trying to pretend that they were on a high horse!”

“.....”

It was not only Sitri. This lady’s other Mountain Faction comrades were showing a similar response. How satisfying, that’s Her Highness Paimon for you, I didn’t think she’d refute like that there..... Without getting bored, the praises towards this lady did not stop and continued on.

Our Mountain Faction's base was quite some distance away from the war and was in the vicinity of mountains and coastlines. Even if the expedition of the Crescent Alliance were to fail, we will not receive damage that is as severe as what the Plains Faction or the Neutral Faction would receive, so their attitude towards war was somewhat carefree, as well. Even if this one fails, there is always next time. That mental attitude was being displayed out in the open.

This lady does not believe that is wrong. Every war immensely wastes manpower and wealth, after all. If possible, resolving the issue through diplomacy is the best. That is why this lady had negotiated with the Empire in secret until now and had prepared different operations in the background.

However, for some reason.

Barbatos' insane laughter and the sound of Marbas' drawn out sigh, for some reason, these sounds stuck to this lady's ears and refused to fall off.

As if trying to shake off something that refused to vanish, this lady turned her gaze towards the human army across the plain. A countless number of flags were waving in that place and were enduring the wind of the season that was approaching us, in advance. War will most likely erupt momentarily.

“.....”

The 4th month and 3rd day.

Winter folds away and Spring blooms anew.

This lady could only close her eyes before the sight of our people trying to vomit blood during this blindness of history, even though the flowers were all respectively emanating a fragrance while in full bloom. This lady wishes to keep her eyes closed like this forever. Even emotions like this dwelled in the corners of this lady's mind.

“Big Sis Paimon, why aren't we going anywhere yet? We should

prepare for war.”

However, there is a voice that pulls this lady.

Once this lady opened her eyes, there were Demon Lords, who were solely waiting for this lady’s orders, lined up before her. As this lady was in the position where she must naturally move, this lady nodded.

“.....Yes. Sitri, and everyone else, return to our military camp and order our soldiers to get into battle formation. Sitri, please stand as our vanguard. This lady shall be the center and follow you.”

“Okay. Leave the front lines to me, sis! Ever since I was born, the only thing I knew how to do is fight, after all!”

With an ‘Ehehe’, Sitri laughed innocently. It was difficult to see that as a face of a general who was about to jump into battle soon. But this was most likely Sitri’s innocence.

That is okay. If you all continue to show only this innocent appearance, then this lady can continue to smile. This lady can walk. Even if it is a war that you did not hope for, this lady shall do what she can to obtain victory.

“Everyone. Order the flag bearers to raise their flags. Blow the horns. It is time to advance.”

“Yes, Your Excellency, Commander!”

All of the Mountain Faction present here responded together.

We most likely should not assault the unit led by the Imperial Princess Elizabeth. That is an entrance to Hell. The weakest army in the Human Alliance, also known as the Crusaders, is probably the imperial army of Francia…… Although the Republic of Batavia is also famous for being the weakest in open warfare…… yes. Obviously, we must aim for the imperial army here.

—— Buuuuuu…….

Before we knew it, the sound of horns being blown could be heard. They were the sound of the Plains Faction horns. It seems Barbatos has started to move. Seeing the direction of their advance…… they are heading exactly towards the imperial army of Habsburg that is being commanded by the Imperial Princess Elizabeth. How pitiful.

“Sis, preparations are complete! You just have to give the order now!”

Sitri ran over like a dog and gazed at this lady.

“Where should we go? Which humans should we end first? Habsburg? Francia? Brittany? The Polish-Lithuanian? Or should we sweep them up all at once?”

“No. We shall exterminate the imperial army of Francia first.”

“Okay!”

Sitri brought the knuckles of her fists together with an audible thud. Even with just that, the air was pushed back such that this lady had nearly dropped her fan. Although this child is simple, she has a flaw in the fact that she behaves rashly.

Now then.

There is no time to hesitate. Although this was a war that this lady had not started and was a war that this lady originally did not intend to participate in, in any case, this lady was standing in a position very close to war. Fortunately, craving for peace but not holding war in contempt is what this lady's army is. Something like the troops of Francia, who are smitten by a disease, we can crush them with ease.

This lady raised the end of her feather fan and pointed towards the direction where we must go.

“Mountain Faction. Advance.”

**¶ The King of Peasants, Rank 71st, Dantalian
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 3
Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance**

———Everything was proceeding just as I had predicted.

Paimon was a depraved betrayer. I was certain that if I showed her an opening, then she would, without a doubt, take the opportunity. Sure enough, Paimon rushed at Barbatos like a coyote that had smelled blood…….

Making me join the Mountain Faction was most likely nothing more than a pretext. Paimon’s true goal was Barbatos. By making my mistake into Barbatos’ fault, she was most likely scheming to make Barbatos fall from her position.

Earlier, while requesting for my military trial, I said this.

—— I am at, all times, only concerned about Your Excellency, Barbatos’ safety and honor.

That was bait.

As if implying that a military trial was the only method to protect Barbatos. I purposely inferred that if I were executed, then the opportunity to make Barbatos take responsibility will disappear along with me. It was nothing more than a small implication, but it seems to Paimon, who was pondering about how to screw the Plains Faction over, she was able to hear it as clear as day.

Was this not splendid?

Paimon, although you are a traitor who had sold out your own kind, you are a traitor with an extraordinarily, peerless intellect. If betraying were a talent, then without a doubt Paimon was gifted with a first-class talent. This was something that I could do nothing else but acknowledge. Honestly, I want to give her a round of applause.

In the first place, in history, Paimon was originally a parasite-like being who betrayed the Demon Lord army and latched onto the hero.

In the game 〈Dungeon Attack〉, the hero encounters Paimon by chance while wandering around a frontier city. In that moment, Demon Lord Paimon fell for the hero at first glance and would appear before them constantly afterward.

—— It is this lady's first time meeting a man such as yourself.

—— This lady shall bestow upon you the right to steal this lady's lips, Mr. Self-entitled Hero.

Befitting her title of the Queen of Succubi, Paimon masterfully approached the hero. Although at that time, the hero had their heart stolen and had felt the emotion called love for the first time, in the end, they were unable to overcome the difference between races and Paimon died by the hero's hands. Funny enough, even after her heart had been pierced by the hero's cold sword, Paimon did not put away her emotion towards the hero.

——Demons and humans living together. This lady had started to dream of that possibility after meeting you. However, it cannot be helped, can it? Since dreams are similar to that of the fluttering of frail flower petals, this lady cannot blame you.

When your final moment arrived.

Paimon smiled while blood dripped down the side of her mouth.

—— This is an already dying body. Could you not bestow upon this lady a final kiss?

As if she were casting a curse.

As if she were bestowing a blessing.

.....Should I call her a romanticist since she was able to achieve her love after having sacrificed her own life?

Although it would have been a relief if she had paid the penalty with only her life, Paimon was the head that led the greatest faction in the demon continent. Due to that, since the hero did not receive any particular threat from the demons, they were able to devote themselves to solving the division within humanity. And the opposition that had to face the hero who was set free was none other than.....

“That was a close call, Lord. In any case, this young lady is never bored whenever she watches Your Lordship from the side. Every now and then, there are days when this young lady believes that Your Lordship’s life may perhaps be just a big joke.”

“.....”

That’s right.

It was this cheeky kid with no facial expressions.

The Imperial Princess Elizabeth, who led the Habsburg Empire, made the hero into her vanguard, and Queen Henrietta, who led the

Kingdom of Brittany, appointed Farnese as a general. The two heroes of the century approached war in order to make their own nation gain supremacy……this was a history that was supposed to unfold 15 years from now. Currently, as much as how I had appointed Farnese myself, it was a future that could absolutely never happen now.

“Furthermore, what was that earlier? Surely Your Lordship was not trying to save this young lady by sacrificing yourself, right? Honestly, this young lady can only say that it was a nuisance, Lord. This young lady would rather be murdered by a Demon Lord than be embraced by Your Lordship. Albeit this young lady judges Your Lordship’s intellect highly, this one has an incredibly objective standpoint when it comes to Your Lordship’s physique. In other words, Your Lordship’s body is a bit dreadful. Something that feels somewhat lacking when embraced by it, something that is so unsightly when allowing one’s body to be completely embraced by it, that it is difficult to find anything else that is as unseemly as this, it is that sort of physique. Therefore, if by chance, danger approaches this young lady, then do not needlessly feel inclined to show off, but instead leave this young lady and…… Ha-ah? Hoa—— ah ah?”

I took Farnese’s hat off and pressed down on the crown of her head. This kid, just because she learned some volubility from Lapis, her cheekiness is really soaring through the roof now. This kind of punk deserved punishment by kneading.

Farnese trembled and swung both of her arms.

“Lord——. Has this young lady not told you, did this young lady not tell you many times already? Uu, hoa. Not the crown. Somewhere else may be fine, but, aah…… Aaah…… the crown, at least not the croooown…….”

“Just obediently melt, you rice cake.”

“Hauh, this young lady is melting. This young lady is becoming a puuulp.”

For this blonde haired child, who’s currently held in my arms and

turning into a mush, to be destined to become a famous general, the archnemesis of the hero, and the calamity of humanity that approaches mankind. Although I was already aware, this world is quite rotten as well.

Shortly after, captains affiliated to the Neutral Faction came to escort me. I could not feel even an ounce of aggressiveness or ill-temperament towards me from them. They merely requested for me to accompany them while maintaining courtesy.

“Although humble, we have prepared the prison cell, Your Highness Dantalian. If perhaps, it is not a discourtesy, then…….”

“What is there to be discourteous of? Guide me there. I shall follow obediently with the mentality of someone who has become a prisoner.”

The captains of the Neutral Faction bowed their heads.

Thereafter, there was literally a humble prison cell located in the place where I had followed the military captains to. Should I call it a prison? It was more similar to an iron cage that was used to contain animals. Only a bundle of straw was strewn about inside of the beast’s cage, there was truly no furniture or decorations.

After seeing the shabby state of the prison cell, Humbaba laughed.

“Ahahah? Is this some sort of fun joke? Or an unfunny joke? Surely you don’t intend to place our master inside a shabby shitcan like this, riiiiight? Should we cast a curse that’ll make you have to live as a eunuch for the rest of your life? Should we zap zap you with a curse that’ll make it so you only feel things with your butts——? I’m just asking out of curiooosity, but do you guys have a great interest in life without women, asceticism, like Buddhist monks?”

“M-My apologies, but this is truly all we have at the moment…….”

“I see that it’s your courtesy to tell people to politely eat shit since that’s all you have at the moment. Mhm. Uhum. I understand. But,

by the way. At the moment, the only thing we can give you right now is a eunuch-curse, what do you think about this maaatter?"

The witches surrounded the captains while smiling brightly. Their faces were certainly laughing, but their gazes were savage. The one who becomes pitiful here was the one responsible. If it were an offense to convey the order of their superior when they had no imperium, then it was their offense.

I let out a sigh.

"Humbaba, it is fine."

"Ara. But, master....."

"Did I not say it was fine? I am being taken as a prisoner, anyway. By all means, would I bask in power after having gone into that small space? Would that place be luxurious just because I say that I am basking in luxury there? If a king were unable to behave as a king, then, at the very least, should a prisoner not behave as a prisoner?"

"No, that's not it."

Humbaba spoke with a very troubled face.

"At the very least, there needs to be a comfortable bed if the likes of us are going to go in there together with master and properly enjoy the relationship between man and woman, right? If we're ordered to copulate on top of a pile of straw, then, of course, we can do it, but when you drag your back on the straw it stings a bit....."

The surrounding witches nodded their heads while saying, 'Mhm'. It seems to be an atmosphere where they were agreeing enthusiastically to what Humbaba stated.

"....."

I quietly pulled on Humbaba's cheek. The cheek of my dear leader of the Royal Guard stretched out like pizza cheese.

“Gehuhuhuh! Gahu, gyahuh!?”

Surely, even a witch’s way of groaning was out of the ordinary.

Without cutting her any slack, I pulled on Humbaba’s cheek to its limit. This fellow, I wonder if it was because she had lived her life being tortured for many days, but she doesn’t even bat an eyelash from normal pain.

“Stop dreaming. What do you mean by going in there with me? You will all immediately follow Farnese here and go to war. Listen well to Farnese and Lapis and come back after you have hunted down many humans.”

“How could that be.”

Humbaba had a face that looked as if the world was ending.

“Since master is in prison already, we wanted to enjoy confinement together…….”

“Do not talk utter shit.”

“Ah. Or perhaps, instead of acting like prisoners, would us playing the role of prison guards be more appropriate to suit master’s preference? Don’t worry. Despite our looks, we’re completely proficient in both abuse and masochism. No matter how perverted master’s hobbies are, we’re reeeady to serve you sincerely!”

“Dear Lord. Now you are talking piss.”

Tsk tsk, I clicked my tongue.

In all seriousness, these fellows were a lost cause. Truly, I didn’t take them in and clothe them in vain.

“Farnese.”

“Mm. Do not worry, Lord. This young lady does not have any desire whatsoever to go to prison with Your Lordship. This young lady can

only hope that Your Lordship obediently goes in prison by yourself and enjoys your life of imprisonment. If Your Lordship is gone, then would that now not make it so that Miss Lapis is the only one to abuse this young lady under the pretext of education? Mhm, how delightful. If possible, it would be great if Your Lordship goes in there and never comes out.”

Farnese nodded to herself.

“Rest assured, Lord. This young lady will give Your Lordship’s regards to Miss Lapis. Of course. This young lady is Your Lordships’ eternally loyal subject. This young lady can deal with this sort of trouble as much as it is required.”

“.....”

This, in its own way, is incredibly annoying.....

Why is it that my so-called vassals go from one extreme to another? Have beautiful concepts such as moderation and restraint not been inputted into their brains, at all? Just what sort of sin did I commit in my previous life that made me have to plan a general idea with this sort of people.....?

Without a doubt, there are most likely people with excellent talent and people well-informed in refinement standing by the Imperial Princess Elizabeth’s side. On the other hand, my acting general was a psychopathic insane person and the leader of my Royal Guard was a pervert, who was driven by lust and only had the color pink in her brain. The world was unfair.....

“All right. What more could I hope from you fellows? Just, perform well during the war. Solely do war well. That is more than enough. Do not go somewhere and live while only taking a beating, okay? If they hit you once, then hit them back twice. I believe you will be able to do at least that much. Is that all right?”

Farnese and Humbaba nodded their heads. In order, they went back after giving a response.

“Of course. If anything, this young lady plans to sever the necks of all the enemy and pile up a tower of bones. From tomorrow forth, just from hearing this young lady’s name the enemy will wet their trousers. Their urine will flow and flow until finally, the entire plain is covered by the liquid, making the stench reach Your Lordship’s prison, this young lady will earnestly hope for this. A rat tail’s amount of this young lady’s filial loyalty will perhaps be contained in there.”

“Even if it doesn’t reach, the likes of us will personally go and fill buckets of it and deliver them to you, master, so do not be concerned. Humble as we are, before vowing our fidelity to you, master, we made a living as couriers, after all. We’ve delivered excrements before, so something like urine is easy!”

“Since I have thoroughly understood how close your existences are to piss and shit, please go away already…….”

Both Farnese and Humbaba saluted before departing.

Once those fellows were gone, the only people left were the Neutral Faction captains and myself. The captains were sneaking glances at me with eyes that appeared as if they were looking at an insane person. Although I considered making an excuse for myself, since it was clear that talking about it would just make me fall further into the pit, I had no other choice but to withstand the wretched feeling.

“Please confine me now.”

“Yes, Your Highness.”

As if they were waiting for it, the captains quickly rushed forward and locked the iron gate. The initial courtesy that they displayed when they were first escorting me had clearly gone missing. I could explicitly sense that their faces were saying, ‘It’ll be a big problem if we don’t shove this perverted bastard in prison quickly’.

.....

Yup. That was fine.

This was a strategy, after all.

By not sticking out in the eyes of the people and being remembered as an ungainly man, in order to pull the strings of the continent behind the curtain, it was a plan from beginning to end. It was true. I am truly fine…….

—— Clank.

The sound of metal resonated and the animal cage was shut.

As if I had become a single disconsolate beast, I gazed up towards the sky helplessly. The sky that had rained momentarily at dawn and was clear only a short while ago, was now dark again. Did the sky intend to supplement the earth, which will soon be covered in blood, with rain?

—— Uuuu…….

—— Buuuuu…….

I could hear the sound of horns in the distance. It felt as if the horns were the sound of thunder falling from the dark clouds in the distant world over there. As thunder roared several times, they struck in places unrelated to me and those people over there fought one another while having nothing to do with me. Although it was a war that I had started, the war was far from me.

“…….”

Drip.

All of a sudden, something fell from the ceiling of the iron cage.

It was cold.

I looked up towards the sky.

Between the gaps of the dark clouds, several drops of rain began to fall. The raindrops, which were closer to being scattered than they were descending, overlapped one another on their own until they soon grew into streaks of rain.

I believed the rain was similar to the streaks of blood that came from the fighting soldiers, who were planted here in this battlefield while their natural will had been ignored. The things that flowed here could not be helped. However, would it not be bitter to consider the things that were made to flow as something that also could not be helped?

—— Woosh, shooooo…….

I predicted that the history that I had started, had begun to flow like a storm alongside that rain. The war that will unfold over there was all mine. However, similar to the time displayed by the hour and minute hands of a clock and the separate time that was unraveled lengthily when music was performed———the torrent and indifferent raindrops, that raged on the other side of the cage, merely fell here a single drop at a time. Indifferent to the time that was flowing over there, my time silently seeped into my body.

“…….”

I took off my top and received the rainwater directly. Within my garments, there was a waist supporter and a pocket watch which I had brought with me beforehand. Among them, the pocket watch ticked lightly.

Barbatos, Paimon, Elizabeth, and Farnese will move around freely on that battlefield. However, when will they all realize that the time which had provided them with that space has always been solely mine? Who will be the first among them to approach me? The rain continued to flow and swept the dust off of my skin and took it down to the earth. The war was far, but that distant war was all mine.

I was here in this prison.



"Oi. If you have an ear as well, then listen to what I have to say."

"Though it actually feels as if people would only need an asshole if they wanted to listen to what you have to say. Occasionally, there are people who I believe it'd be a waste to use my ear holes on. Unfortunately, you're one of those people."

"I heard it as well. They died again, right?"

"Laura De Farnese."

"I've been hearing only that bitch's name lately."

"There are only two types of people in war who have their names spread wide. Someone who kills the enemy well or someone who kills fellow comrades well. At the very least, it's a relief that there hasn't been anyone who became famous from killing their comrades yet."

"The day before yesterday it was Brittany, today it was Batavia, and it may end up being Habsburg or Sardinia tomorrow. They say the scythe of the grim reaper doesn't discriminate people by borders or ask people what their nation is."

"But they say she spares the people who surrender."

"Yeah. I also heard she distributes food regularly!"

"Yup, she'll spare you and give you food, all right. But that's after she rips the skin off of your skull. They say that you can see the tower of skulls she piled up clearly if you go over there. I heard the bulge in the horizon looks as if the ground has an erection."

"At any rate, the way you talk is really crude……."

"If I'm crude, then you're vulgar, you fuck."

"Whether you two are crude or vulgar is not an important matter. If need be, it may be applicable to both sides. In truth, there is an incredibly high chance that it can be applied to both sides. The important thing is that the soldiers……."

"The soldiers are shaking up. Did they say it was a class strife? Every time battle erupts, I heard they use amplification magic and repeat that exact same speech from the previous day. That's why the occasions of the troops losing morale before they're able to even engage in a proper fight against Laura De Farnese were the majority of engagements."

"Despite that, she's nothing more than a whore."

"I'm saying this in case you don't know, but soldiers really like prostitutes."

"The world is coming to an end."

"And you're a motherfucker."

"That bitch."

"Like I said, the bitch."

"Though I'm not sure if she's crude, and I'm unsure whether she's vulgar or not."

"In any case, the bitch who it wouldn't be strange if she were both."

"If anything, the girl who feels as if she has to be applicable to both."

"Laura De Farnese."

"The plague-like fellow who goes around needlessly encouraging disorder in our peaceful continent of humanity."

"That bitch's mother probably lamented after giving birth to that bitch. Ah, for me to have given birth to a leper like this. It would probably have been better if she gave birth to a handful of poisonous snakes."

"It would have been better if she hadn't been born in the first place. If that were the case, then everyone would have been happy. There isn't a single person in the world who would welcome that girl."

"Yeah. She'll most likely be thrown away by the Demon Lords after she's been used, anyway."

"It'd be great if she killed herself."

"Why is she still alive?"

"It'd be great—."

"If she disappeared."

"Vanished from our sight."

"—if she died right this instant."

Translator's Notes

1. [\[1\]](#) A saying in Korea that means “One can be influenced by their surroundings”.

Chapter Two

Thou Come to Me

I'll admit it now. I'm a son of a bitch. If I'm to be a bit more honest, then I should confess that I'm not just a simple son of a bitch, but a very intelligent son of a bitch.

I was not only the smartest person among the people I knew, but I was also the most honest. To be exact, as I was smart enough to realize that I was a son of a bitch, I was also honest enough to admit only that fact. Individuals who possessed both wisdom and honesty, like myself, were rare to find.

If someone were to approach that me and inquire what I thought was the most well-done thing that I've ever done in my life, then the boundlessly honest me, the limitlessly wise me, would have no other choice but to respond like this.

That it was the act of shoving my father into prison.

“.....”

Three days since I was imprisoned.

Rain descended today as well. My hair was completely drenched and was now hampering my eyes. I left it to be soaked. Even if I brush my hair aside, what would that change? Because of the spring rain, even my inner flesh was aching.

Ah, Farnese.

I see that because both you and I carry the sin of having a bad father, our minds have been crippled. Why are we not twisted when we have been trying to accept the world with our disabled bodies? Why do our knees not collapse? If we are breaking the world, then all we need to do is attempt to throw aside the weight before our knees buckle, but when people witness us doing that, they criticize us for being cruel.

It has only been three days since the speech was given, but I had received information that, within the enemy front lines, the rumors that Farnese was an illegitimate child from a Duke's house, was sold off as a slave, and that her blood mother was a whore, were already widespread.

Even if Farnese's defamation was fast, this was tremendously fast. Should I say that's the Imperial Princess Elizabeth for you? She was no fool. Illegitimate child, slave, and whore……. These were all nothing but stimulating words. She knew how to attack the figurehead. Truly, she was flawless…….

If possible, I wanted to organize the structure of the Crescent Alliance a day sooner and effectively retaliate against the Imperial Princess Elizabeth. More than anything else, the current three faction structure, in other words, there was a need to overcome this system where the Mountain Faction-Neutral Faction-Plains Faction were splitting up the military power. This was an obvious task. For these people to split the forces into three parts when we would still be lacking even if we were to combine together, it was difficult to see them as sane.

A Crescent Alliance that has become one. Not an army where Barbatos or Paimon is the center, but a Crescent Alliance centered around me, must be formed. In order to do so, three conditions must be met.

First, I have to clearly prove the fact that I am very competent. If I am incompetent, then the reason to put me at the center of the Crescent Alliance would disappear.

Second, I have to also prove that Farnese is extremely competent as well. If she were incompetent, then the need to appoint her as the figurehead would vanish. For example, the situation where I will be spared at the price of purging Farnese had occurred. The recent occurrence belonged to this sort of flow of events. In short, the Demon Lords have yet to realize Farnese's competence…….

And finally, the third. I had to prove the fact that the Imperial Princess Elizabeth was heinously competent. If the Imperial Princess were incompetent, then the reason to keep Farnese and myself alive in order to stand against her, will perish. The delusion that they alone would be sufficient to stand against her, was highly likely to spread throughout the Demon Lords. 〈Dungeon Attack〉 was the product of such a future where this delusion had completely controlled the Demon Lord army. It was the worst case scenario that must be avoided at all costs.

..... Surely, it was battle. Battle was the answer. By engaging in a large fight, let us prove to them who the most competent individuals of this era are. I desired for a magnificent, and yet, comedic battle.

Child, quickly achieve a tremendous victory and return.

There are many things I wish to tell you.

I was here in this prison.

□ The King of Peasants, Rank 71st, Dantalian
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 6
Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance, Simple Prison

“Oi, Skinnybones. Eat this and live. You have to eat for a living, too.”

Around evening.

A woman with a figure that was large like a pole approached me. The individual known as rank 12th, Demon Lord Sitri, was on night watch today. Since I was a prisoner with a special status, and since the nature of my crime was severely political, the Demon Lords would stand on night watch one person at a time and in a rotation. It was a rather luxurious reception.

The surveillance lasted throughout the day. There were several torches around the animal cage, but it seems they were imbued with some sort of magic since they did not get extinguished easily despite having been drenched by rainwater. As the torches burned throughout the night, the surveillants, who depended on that light, stared at me deviously.

For the past 3 days, the personalities of the surveillants differed in various ways. A certain Demon Lord, who was dispatched from the Plains Faction, seemed to have truly suspected that I would try and make an escape so they personally held a torch in their hand and came close to the cage in order to monitor me up close. It seems they sincerely believed that I had committed high treason, but on the contrary, I welcomed that innocence.

In case I was aiming to escape, in case I was making contact with the outside, or if either of those didn't happen, then in case I was leisurely enjoying my time here after having secretly received from one of the other guards a type of luxury or debauchery, which prisoners were absolutely not allowed to have. Without blinking even

once, the surveillant kept watching me. The large man, who introduced himself as Beleth, was the rank 13th Demon Lord.

The people from the Neutral Faction handled the surveillance half-heartedly. They would openly promise that they would provide me with special meals or snacks if I asked them for some. In their perspective, they claimed that in some ways I, Dantalian, had committed a crime but in other ways, I had not, therefore, the thing to determine which side was correct purely depended on the negotiation between the Plains Faction and the Mountain Faction. At this point, since I'm not a criminal, but be that as it may, that didn't make me not a criminal, they didn't have a need to punish me nor did they have a requirement to serve me. As a result, they stated that if it's something simple like giving me a meal, then they can at least show kindness in that regard. I politely refused their goodwill.

A handful of straw for sleeping purposes.

An uncomfortable and hard wooden chair.

Those were all the things that were provided for me.

I spent my time watching the raining sky. Occasionally, Lapis or Farnese would come find me in order to give me a report on what had happened thus far. Although Lapis tried to take my life, unfortunately, there were firm metal bars placed between us. Lapis told me off because I had made the situation worse when the issue wasn't something that I had to go out of my way to be imprisoned for. I shrugged my shoulders and said nothing more.

If I were to speak honestly, then I felt safer and more comfortable within this prison cell than I did outside. I was quite the extreme bastard. The only thing that I required was either a place to sleep with a 3-meter radius or the entire world. In regards to which side piled up comparatively less stress, the former was a rank higher than the latter. It's paradise, I say. Paradise.

"Although I really, really don't like you. Regardless of that, I believe that someone shouldn't be unable to eat just because someone else

doesn't like them, you know?"

Demon Lord Sitri, who volunteered to be the surveillant on the third day, was close to Paimon. She and I had a deep connection in various respects. Sitri had witnessed the sight of me breaking Paimon during the hearing, and during the process of preparing for this war, she had sent her subordinates to obstruct me. Although it was my first time facing her in person, I was not unfamiliar with her.

Referentially, even within the demon continent that is said to have many perverts, Sitri was a woman who was renowned for being a high-class pervert due to the fact that she had done all sorts of perverse acts. From what I have heard, she was not only an acquired hermaphrodite, but there was an extravagant record saying that she had slept with every single race, along with every gender of each race, that exists within the demon continent. The majority of the Demon Lords were like that.

Sitri ripped a piece of bread and pushed it towards me between the bars.

"Here."

"I have a body that is fine even if I do not eat anything in particular, though."

"I heard it from the people who were keeping watch over you yesterday. They said you didn't eat anything yesterday or the day before that, isn't that right? Don't do that. Even if us Demon Lords are fellows who are fine without food, you have to at least have one meal every two days. If you don't, then you'll lose it, you know?"

What does she mean by losing something?

I tilted my head.

"Lose what?"

"Your sense of living."

Sitri gazed this way while maintaining her posture of handing the piece of bread to me.

“It’s fine if you don’t particularly eat, right? It’s fine if you don’t particularly sleep, right? There’s quite the number of Demon Lords who became vegetables because they got used to that. Why do you think only half of all the Demon Lords are participating in the Crescent Alliance?”

Although there is probably a political reason behind that.

Sitri shook her head.

“I’m a meathead, so I don’t really understand difficult things that well. Things like politics are something Big Sis Paimon will think about and contemplate. But there are fellows who completely lose their facial expressions after having lived off of only liquids for an entire month. Did you know that those guys are really interesting? They react if you touch their bodies, but even if you tickle them or beat them, their faces stay void of emotions, void. Thinking their expression would perhaps come back if I did this, I even tried raping them, but nothing changed. It never came back.”

“.....”

“Eat. You’ll be able to live if you eat.”

I carefully received the piece of bread.

Only then did Sitri nod in satisfaction. She then sat flat on the ground and ate her portion of the bread. Really, each and every one of her actions felt barbaric. The most luxurious lady among the Demon Lords was Paimon, and yet the people actually around her were like this. It was surprising.

“.....”

In an area a slight distance away, there were two guards standing there. It was most likely for the purpose of hiding their identities, but

they were concealing themselves by wearing a white military uniform from head to toe. They didn't give any particular response even after witnessing Sitri sit down so uncourtously. That must mean that this was her normal behavior, this Demon Lord called Sitri.

“You're sex-friends with that bitch Barbatos, right? How is it? Does she appear even slightly like a decent person when having sex?”

I shrugged my shoulders.

“That is a question that severely invades one's privacy.”

“No, it's because it's surprising, really surprising. Though it's intriguing that among the Demon Lords, Barbatos was the one to make a sex-friend, but yeah. It's that, you know? That. You're living rather well while having sex with that sort of bitch— that sort of feeling? Did you know that among the people she's gone out with thus far, excluding one person, all of them have died by her hands?”

Barbatos.

I shouldn't be the one to say this, but you need to watch your public image a bit.

“But that is something I am hearing for the first time. The fact that she has killed all of her lovers. That is interesting. Is it possible to tell me the details?”

“Yeah. But when I think about it, this is something that seriously invades someone's privacy as well, you know?”

Sitri casually chewed on the bread.

“If I reveal someone else's private life, then I'll be the only one who'd become a bad bitch. That's why you tell me first about how it's like to have sex with Barbatos. If someone's going to become a bad bitch, then everyone has to become a bad bitch together.”

“.....”

Rank 12th, Demon Lord Sitri was an individual who properly understood how to bargain…….

No, in the first place, I'm a man.

I'm not sure if it were a bad bastard, but I'm incapable of becoming a bad bitch.

Once I pointed that out, Sitri furrowed her brow.

“Skinnybones, when you call someone a son of a bitch, do you call them that because you believe they're really the child of a dog?”

“No.”

“Retard is something you say to someone who isn't a retard, right?”

“Yes.”

“Then ‘son of a bitch’ and ‘retard’. I'm sorry, but can you tell me the reason why I can swear at you by calling you a son of a bitch and a retard, but I can't call you a bad bitch?”

I couldn't give a response.

As a result, I was forced into a position where I had to give a vivid description of, and also depict, how it was like to have sex with Barbatos. I'm not sure how exactly I had ended up in this state, but I did. I cleared my throat.

“First off, Miss Sitri, Barbatos has a very colorful variety of facial expressions. Even if she normally goes around laughing confidently, she is different when on top of a bed. Of course, we do not only do it on top of a bed but beside the bed, on the floor, somewhere with something to grab, or somewhere that has nothing to grab whatsoever, as we fornicate freely, speaking strictly, you can see it as Barbatos showing a different appearance in an incredible amount of many different places. In that regard, Barbatos is not a bad bitch who only goes around laughing like everyone assumes.”

“Hoh, hoh.”

Sitri nodded her head. The sight of her eyes sparkling in anticipation made it appear as if she were some female middle school student who was earnestly listening to a sex education class.

“And so?”

“First, according to who decides to take the role as the master and who decides to take the role as the slave for that day’s copulating session———.”

I explained.

“Even if the leading position changes slightly every day, according to the overall agreement we make either implicitly or explicitly, scat is not allowed but golden showers are okay———.”

I explained.

“Related to that, since the number of spells Barbatos made herself is quite substantial, she can freely control the degree of sensitivity and the degree of what can be endured beyond one’s capabilities———.”

I continued to explain.

“.....”

As the explanation went on and on, Sitri’s eyes, which were once sparkling, became dim and murky until eventually, it became the complete opposite meaning, in other words, her eyes degenerated until they were no longer sparkling in interest, but instead, they were glinting with scorn like the eyes of a dead fish. After vomiting twice and clearing her insides, Sitri spoke.

“Woow……. You guys are really fucked up…….”

That was an unreasonable criticism.

“Do you really want to live while doing that? No, that’s the wrong

way around. Do you really want to do that while you live? Can't you fool around a bit more normally?"

"Although I wish to do so, it seems Barbatos does not like ordinary things."

"Don't make me laugh. When you were describing everything to me your face was full of life and you sounded as if you were rejoicing. You two are both serious perverts."

That was a ridiculous slander.

"Wow, how am I supposed to look at that bitch, Barbatos's face from now on? Won't I recall your explanation every time I see her? With that face, with that small physique..... Oh God. Hey, what exactly did you tell me just now? Why did you tell me something like this? Do you want to die?"

"Oh dear. I voiced my refusal to tell you the details but did Miss Sitri not keep insisting me to tell you anyway?"

"Even I didn't expect it to be this much. Although at one point I did consider the chance that perverts like that may exist somewhere in the world, I didn't possibly expect that it'd be the two of you. Even if perverts like that existed, I believed that I should accept them with a liberal mind, but after meeting one in person, I don't think I can. I'm sorry, but can you die a bit?"

She was an absurd person.

It was now my turn to ask.

"Miss Sitri, it is your turn to tell me now. Is it true that Barbatos dealt with every single one of her lovers with her own two hands?"

"Not all. It was all of them excluding one."

"Is that not the same thing?"

“Mm.”

Sitri scratched the back of her head.

“Well, wouldn’t it be her way of handling her own weaknesses? Essentially, Barbatos doesn’t trust people. She’s been betrayed a lot and she’s betrayed others a lot. But aren’t lovers a relationship where one side can be betrayed easily and can also betray the other side easily? If you’re going to be betrayed anyway, then betraying them first would make your mind feel a bit more at ease.”

“That sounds like an extreme assumption…….”

“What I’m trying to say is.”

Sitri let out a sigh.

“She uses black magic really fucking well, right? Barbatos wasn’t originally a mage, she was a warrior. But she got massively betrayed once during a war, so that’s why she converted to a necromancer.”

“What is the relation between being betrayed and becoming a necromancer?”

Sitri tilted her head.

“Corpses, I’m talking about corpses. You can control corpses with necromancy, you know? Corpses that have already died will also never betray you.”

“…….”

“I know. That feeling you have right now. She’s really mental, right? That’s why I don’t like her. I understand that the betrayal must have been a shock. However, how should I say it? It’s that, that sort of feeling.”

It was drastic.

Now that I think about it.

Now that I look back at it.

During that night when snow fell heavily, after furtively waking me up and dragging me outside, Barbatos showed to me the sight of her raising a massive army of undead as if she were trying to show off..... What was going through her head at that moment?

What was her ulterior motive behind triumphantly showing to me, the person who was, as her lover, standing in the easiest position to betray and be betrayed by her, the soldiers that will absolutely never go against her?

Sitri spoke.

“It’s possible to gain scars while you live your life. But what’s with the people who try to scar the world back just because they got hurt? Isn’t that the complete opposite? Since I was scarred, I should pursue that much more a world where other people won’t be injured. People should have a good attitude like that.”

Surely.

I understood.

Sitri was different compared to **us**.

The day she is able to comprehend Barbatos, me, Lapis, or Farnese will most likely never arrive. That incomprehension was neither sad nor unreasonable. It was beautiful and rational. It was fine for her to live on as herself.

I smiled contently for the first time in a long while.

“I see Miss Sitri is a good individual.”

“Hm?”

“It would be great if there were only people like yourself in the world. However, it cannot be helped. Barbatos is a strong woman. If

there were an incident that was capable of completely changing Barbatos, then, although I do not know what it was, it must have been that much of a tremendous occurrence. Nothing can be done about it. Please show some understanding.”

“.....”

Sitri stared straight at my face.

“You, do you even know what sort of situation you’re in right now? It’s the same as Barbatos having locked you up herself. So why are you sticking up for her?”

“I did not stick up for anyone. I am merely acknowledging the fact that something inevitable is inevitable. I consider myself to be a son of a bitch, but at the same time, I am an honest son of a bitch. It’s unexpectedly difficult, the way of the world, that is.”

I chuckled lightly.

“I feel as if it is about time I should ask. Miss Sitri, have I passed?”

“Passed?”

“I am asking if you believe it is fine to not kill me. Please do not feign ignorance. Did you not lace the piece of bread that you handed to me with poison?”

“.....”

Sitri’s expression froze for a moment.

A silence fell over us for a long period of time.

The heavy rain changed into a drizzle and made it seem as if the sky was salting the earth. I took off my top and wiped my body with a ragged towel. Even if I were to allow myself to be hit by the rain, I had to wipe myself at appropriate times in order to avoid catching a cold. The reason why my insides felt cold was most likely not solely

because of the rain.

Sitri opened her lips.

“How?”

“I wonder? There were quite a lot of signs. First off, you approached me while acting in a much too friendly manner. You tore the bread into two pieces and handed me one-half, while Miss Sitri, you personally ate the other. That is a behavior which is normally seen between two people who are close to one another like family members. On the other hand, the relationship between Miss Sitri and myself is…… Mm, not too favorable.”

“…….”

Sitri was close to Paimon. In Sitri’s perspective, it wouldn’t be lacking to assume that I was Paimon’s political enemy. But Sitri approached me, who was that sort of individual, in a friendly manner and handed me a piece of bread?

It is possible to merely consider her as someone who has generosity and does not care about trifling things. In truth, that is a positive outlook. Sadly, ever since I was born, I have been a bastard who barely has any memories of himself looking at the world in a positive perspective. She had some underlying motive. It was sensible to arrive at such a conclusion.

For example, something like purposely eating the same bread in order to not be suspected for having poisoned the food.

Through such a process, I made my assumption.

I did so ever since I was very little.

“Next would be the part where you vomited after having heard about the obscene antics between Barbatos and myself. I am not deaf. I recall hearing people say several times about how you, Miss Sitri, have quite a high level of perversion. In comparison to such an

individual, the acts carried out between Barbatos and myself are most likely nothing more than child's play. Despite that, you dry heaved..... I could only judge it as you having deliberately forced out whatever was in your stomach."

"....."

"I am not sure what your reason behind poisoning me is, but let us leisurely discuss it now. For starters, the antidote. You have it, right? If it is not a discourtesy, then please hand it over. Even if I have quite a numerous amount of experiences in being poisoned, certainly, something that cannot be helped, cannot be helped. I am unable to throw away my desire to live."

Now then.

I stuck out my hand.

Sitri looked at my hand with a rigid face. It was a bit troubling since the only thing she continued to give me was a vacant gaze. Does she have no intention to hand me the antidote? Despite how I am, I am a man who has only considered his death to happen by the hands of either Lapis or by the hands of Elizabeth. If I get poisoned to death by some side character like you, then that would be dishonorable to those two girls.

"It is fine if I were to scream right now. Those sentinels over there standing guard will most likely come running here. It will be over then. As I will testify that Miss Sitri had attempted to kill me with poison, as much as Miss Sitri is a close aid to Her Excellency, Paimon, the entire Mountain Faction will be held accountable for that crime. Do you wish for that to happen?"

"....."

"After the military trial was rejected, the Demon Lord, who all three factions were taking custody of together, was assassinated by one of the leading members of the Mountain Faction. How marvelous. I can vividly see this being shouted throughout the demon continent. Aha,

of course, if causing a commotion is Miss Sitri's hobby, then I will not stop you. That is good. Chaos. I too like it quite a lot."

Sitri bit her lips tightly.

She slid her hand into her coat pocket and pulled out a glass vial. A bright yellow liquid, that looked similar to natural honey, sloshed around within the bottle. I received the glass vial and gulped the liquid down in a single motion.

Mm, what a foul taste. It seriously tastes bad. Why is it that there are many types of poisons that taste nice, but the actual antidotes all taste revolting? It was puzzling.

".....I'm saying this beforehand, but this has absolutely no relation to big sis Paimon. This is something I did arbitrarily."

"A good excuse. At the very least, it sounds like a plausible excuse to my ears. I shall personally hope that the other Demon Lords, as well, hear it in the same manner as I did during court."

It was at that moment.

One of the soldiers, who was standing guard a slight distance away from the prison, took off their white military uniform. Once their military cap fell off and their mantle was set free, the person standing there was, surprisingly, Demon Lord Paimon. The look of panic was apparent on her face. Even until this moment, this was a sufficiently intriguing performance, but what Paimon said to Sitri was more well-worth seeing.

"Sitri, you.....! You said that you wished to test him for a moment in order to see what kind of person he was, but for you to use poison! Did the test have this sort of meaning!?"

Sitri scratched the back of her head.

"Haa. Sis, as expected, I don't like this guy. A certain smell is coming off from him. The smell of a corpse rotting. It goes without

saying that as much as sis is the leader of the Mountain Faction, I don't have even the slightest right to disagree, but…….”

“You fool! That is not the problem right now!”

Paimon hurriedly ran directly in front of my cell and lowered her head. It wasn't only once. Two times, three times, four times, as if she were literally trying to confirm just how close her existence was to the ground, she bowed her head multiple times.

“This lady apologizes, Dantalian. This lady is sincerely sorry. Sitri did not have any bad intentions. It is just that, when it is something related to this lady, this child gets strangely worked up……. This lady begs your pardon. This lady will do whatever is possible to apologize, so please forgive Sitri…….”

“Did not have any bad intentions, is it?”

I leisurely watched over Paimon's heated apology.

I did not feel impatient just because I had nearly been poisoned to death a second ago. In the political spectrum, a failed assassination attempt is one of the most deplorable crimes. Depending on how I utilized this, it had infinite value.

In the first place, I did not trust Paimon even remotely. After all this time, there was no reason for me to be shocked even if she utilized means such as poison.

“It has not been even a single year since the day I had received an apology from Your Highness Paimon during the Walpurgis Night. At that time, Your Highness had tried to remove me politically. Since slander did not work, is it now poison and assassination? How remarkable.”

From start to end, I spoke sarcastically and in a calm tone. Paimon's complexion paled.

Three days have passed since the war had begun. I had heard that

during those several days, Paimon had obtained quite the good war record while facing against the imperial army of Francia. Although they have yet to carry out a decisive battle, it was fine to say that she had excellent results. Barbatos was displaying results that were the complete opposite of a good meaning by suffering huge losses while facing against the imperial army of Habsburg.

However, an attempted murder case contained an explosive force with the capability of overthrowing some huge loss like that in an instant. In Paimon's perspective, this was no different to a nightmare.

"Dantalian, this lady is speaking the truth. Because this lady merely wished to officially accept you, Dantalian, into the Mountain Faction..... Before this lady could speak to you, Sitri requested of this lady to allow her to converse with you first in order to determine what type of individual you are....."

"I see that within the Mountain Faction, you poison people and see how long they can endure in order to judge their character. That is impressive."

"Dantalian....."

Paimon gazed at me with a face that appeared as if she were about to collapse at any moment. She slowly lowered herself to her knees. The ground, which was damp because of the rain, dirtied her skirt with mud. After seeing that, Sitri furrowed her brow.

"Sis, for that sort of man, you don't."

"Seal your lips. You have no right to speak."

Paimon coldly cut off the words of her close aid.

"Dantalian. This lady understands that she does not appear as a trustworthy person to you. Yes, this lady has doubted you and slandered you several times before. Nevertheless, I assure you that there is not even the slightest amount of ulterior motive behind this proposal to accept you under the flag of the Mountain Faction.If

you tell this lady to prove it, then she shall. Therefore, please listen to this lady's words."

"....."

It was amazing.

What was amazing was the fact that Paimon's acting ability was so impressive that it made it feel as if her words just now were passionately sincere. That brazen personality of hers, which supported her acting ability, was tremendous. My Lord. If it were someone else, then they would have probably been completely fooled by now.

That's why this woman.

Not only did she try to frame me for something ridiculous like spreading the disease on my own, but she tried to use the enemy by selling the Memoria artifact to the Imperial Princess Elizabeth. She purposely refused the military trial in order to come between Barbatos and myself, and if need be, this woman was someone who would do something daring like resorting to poison. And yet, she expected me to believe her when she claimed that there were no ill-intentions behind any of those actions.

Was it not splendid? Even my father was unable to become that outspokenly shameless. I unconsciously smiled bitterly.

"Please stand, Your Highness. That is disgraceful."

"Pardon?"

"Is there any point if Your Highness were to receive myself into the Mountain Faction? No matter how much Your Highness loathes Barbatos, do you wish to go that far just to impair her? Of course, it is not something which I personally should be saying when I had voluntarily requested for my own trial because I was aware that Your Highness would behave in such a way....."

That was so. In regard to the usage of other people's emotions,

Paimon and I were the same. The problem was, despite being like that, Paimon continued to act as if she were detached and upright, all on her lonesome.

“I am genuinely curious. Is it enjoyable to live like that?”

Have pride as a cunning person of influence, Paimon.

I am aware that you cherish your subjects. However, be it an evildoer using a good person or a good person using an evildoer, if you have used someone at your own discretion, then in that moment, both you and I have already become equal schemers. Are you and I both not beasts, savages that possess the teeth that can tear off an ample amount of another’s flesh?

Paimon pleaded.

“No, that is wrong. You are fundamentally misunderstanding something. Even regarding Barbatos, there is some large misunderstanding……. Right now, right now is your last chance. You must grab this lady’s hand. Barbatos is truly going to purge you using this opportunity.”

“…….”

“Sitri said it as well. Barbatos, that child does not leave alone the people who know her weakness. Barbatos is a master of acting. Quickly, if you do not enter the Mountain Faction and solidify your standing, then you will be purged in a blink of an eye and…….”

“Alienation in a moment like this as well, is it?”

I let out a big sigh. Paimon flinched.

This will not do.

I went through my clothes, which I had taken off earlier, beside me and took out a pocket watch. It was the evidence that went from Humbaba’s hand to Paimon’s, from Paimon’s hand to the Imperial

Princess Elizabeth's, and from the Imperial Princess Elizabeth's hand to my own.

“.....That is.”

This was an item that was familiar to even Paimon's eyes. The focus of her red eyes trembled. I nodded my head and displayed the pocket watch to her.

“Oh dear. It appears as if you are quite familiar with this item, Your Highness. Have you, perhaps, recalled the moment in time when you had last seen it?”

“.....”



“Yes, please stand up and take a closer look. This is a Memoria artifact. My acting general, Miss Laura De Farnese’s secret and origin is contained within this object. After the negotiation with the Imperial Princess of the Empire, she had passed this on to me. The Imperial Princess is a smart individual. By using this secret she would, without a doubt, assault Farnese’s dignity. Furthermore, the political blow that my acting general receives will most likely be transferred directly to me, as well.”

I hummed as if I were telling her an amusing story. However, as my words continued, Paimon’s face merely became more rigid.

“I am not certain who it was, but it seems whoever had gifted this to the Imperial Princess of the Empire must have abhorred me quite a lot. It is sad. I do not recall ever committing any particular wrongdoing, but for myself to receive such resentment……. That is why even if I do not wish for it to happen, an antagonizing relation forms between myself and that person. Is that not the case, Your Highness?”

“…….”

What’s with that face, Paimon? There aren’t a lot of things in the world that is as exciting as the progress of self-discovery. Therefore, even if that bare face of yours, which you had just discovered, was that of a ridiculously foul hypocrite, that is your true nature. If you are incapable of loving your own self, then who could possibly cherish you?

It was fine. I, as expected, loved my own life that was insane about authority. The reason we loved life wasn’t because we were familiar with life, but because we were familiar with love. Even you shall one day love your hypocritical self.

I raised the corners of my mouth.

“Do not worry. I too am not a fool. At the very least, I know why the Imperial Princess had returned this sort of bomb to me. She most

likely hoped that I would establish this as a problem and cause an internal strife within the Crescent Alliance. The Imperial Princess, too, is quite the outstanding figure…….”

On the day I had broken down the negotiation and returned to my camp, I was quite surprised to see the content within the pocket watch. I was moved and moved again by Paimon’s stubbornness that consistently tried to get rid of me. It was not a joke. Perhaps Paimon had jumped over logic and was able to sense it through her intuition.

The fact that the individual who had moved this era was me, Dantalian.

Paimon was the first one to sense it among the existing authority figures. That was why she had struggled to get rid of me…….

It was a remarkable foresight. I shall appraise it highly. However, you had made a mistake. Instead of trying to ostracize me, you should have solely tried to pull me in. At the very least, similar to what Barbatos had done, you should have created a partnership where both parties used one another.

During the time when I still appeared like a pushover, your grave mistake was the fact that you had bared your teeth abruptly. The weak will never forget the arrogance of the strong.

Now then.

“Your Highness Paimon.”

The fact that you are a backstabber, who had sold me out, has been explicitly revealed. What will you do now? Personally, I am tremendously curious about how much your shameless brazenface can endure.

“Do you, perhaps, have anything more to say to me?”

“…….”

Paimon lowered her gaze. She did not raise her head immediately. Even from here, I could see her lips open, close, and open again.

Shortly after, Paimon muttered in a small voice.

“.....sorry. Because this lady.”

With a wavering voice that sounded as if it were flowing out from her innermost heart.

“Because this lady, is incompetent..... Because she is incompetent to no end, this lady is sorry.....”

Those were somewhat strange words to say as an apology.

Paimon no longer tried to plead or make any more excuses. She merely stood up, with her face still looking downwards, and left. The edge of her mantle, that had become dirtied by the rain, was dragged behind her like a tide.

“.....”

Sitri, the culprit behind today's incident, gazed at me with no emotion on her face before chasing after Paimon shortly after.

And thus, the only things which remained at my side were, once again, the handful of straw, the shabby wooden chair, and the two puddles of muddy water that had yet to dry. I was finally able to let out a sigh of relief once everyone was gone. Although it was a living that didn't really have much, I was satisfied with just that.

“Haa.”

Is it about time now?

I looked up towards the dimmed night sky.

Although Paimon had insisted that I was misunderstanding something, on the contrary, that was something I wanted to say to her. Not just Paimon, but Barbatos as well seemed to be firmly

misunderstanding a single thing. Similar to how Paimon seemed to believe that this was a war which she must handle, Barbatos seemed to think that this was a war that she had started. Unfortunately, they were both wrong. From start to finish, this war was mine.

There was a need to make them realize this.

If they planned to distance me from the war, then so be it. Try putting me far away. However, they will realize tomorrow.

———The reality that even if I do not approach war, it will more than gladly approach me.

Farnese.

Our time has come.

▯ **A King's Lone Sword, Human, Laura De Farnese**
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 7
Bruno Plains, The Center of the Army of the Crescent Alliance

Authority for blood.

Blood for authority.

“.....”

This young lady stared up at the flag for a long period of time.

His Lordship's flag. The proverb that was embroidered with silver thread. The lines made from warp and woof^[1] that bound us and His Lordship together. I did not dislike those words that emanated His Lordship's body odor and fragrance.

We did not only train the 7,000 elite soldiers during the icy-cold winter. His Lordship bestowed uniforms upon us vassals and created a new maxim. While this young lady trained the 7,000 fully segregated soldiers, His Lordship assembled the 7,000 into a single unit. This young lady's training and His Lordship's assembling interlinked together and by the time the beginning of spring had arrived, we had formed a single distinct and strong army.

Humbaba, the head of the Royal Guard, spoke.

“This, it seems we're going to go to battle today without master again.”

“There is no problem whatsoever.”

This young lady spoke calmly.

“Honestly speaking, His Lordship is not particularly useful during battle. At most, he is mediocre, and can only be considered wise when stretching the rules. Since His Lordship is gone, it should feel as if the head of our forces were cut off, but it almost feels as if our tail was severed, making our body lighter.”

“Ahah. I’m only saying this because master isn’t here, but I’d like to say that I think likewise!”

The Royal Guard’s captain cackled.

Her laughter, if this young lady were to go out of her way to express it, contained a certain something that could only be described as crazy-like. Strictly speaking, even the expression crazy-like was actually wrong. It was not as if she were crazy, but she was craziness in itself. If this young lady were to honestly confess, then among the people serving under His Lordship, this young lady was the only vassal that was at least sane.

Miss Lapis was more similar to that of an incredibly intelligent wild animal than that of a person. Starting from Humbaba, the leader of the Royal Guard, every single one of the witches were feathered animals whose heads were completely hell-bent on lust. His Lordship, who was taking care of these types of vassals on both of his sides, was literally a beast among beasts and the king among savage animals. On an impulse, an educated person such as this young lady was captured into this extremely dangerous zoo, so it was quite terrifying.

Oh, it is an icy-cold season. Even though winter had passed, the season remained cold. For an intelligent woman such as this young lady to live, the wind of the world has become frigid one place at a time…….

The Royal Guard’s captain beamed and turned this way.

“Now then. Dear honorable acting general? Where should we mess up first?”

“Hm.”

This young lady looked out onto the battlefield.

Currently, our corps had obtained continuous victories.

The Crescent Alliance and the Crusaders were confronting one another with a total of surprisingly 200,000 soldiers, which was extensive enough to carry out pitched battles. However, the reality was somewhat different. In the Crescent Alliance, the forces were separated into the Plains Faction, Neutral Faction, and the Mountain Faction. Each respective group was fighting by themselves. The Crusaders were the same, as well. Each of their nations operated their armies separately while fighting against us.

As a result, as if the unit of 7,000 hired soldiers, which this young lady led, had become a detached force, we went through the battles unfolding on the field and poked at the enemy forces here and there.

Yesterday we had swept away the knights of the Kingdom of Brittany. The day before yesterday we had slaughtered three earls from the Empire of Francia. The day before that was the regiment from the Republic of Batavia. It was a pleasing battlefield where there was a joy in picking your prey. Aah, how delightful. This young lady was in bliss. This young lady was certain that she was born into this regretful world in order to cause chaos here.

The Crusaders have most likely begun to detest this young lady.

It was about time to stop playing around and harvest the hatred.

“For the past several days, the human armies have continued to get done in by this young lady over and over again. Regardless of whether they were disparate groups separated according to their nations, if what is attached to their necks are heads and not empty shells, then they will be planning a joint operation.”

“Aha. So the armies will join up and plan together in order to hunt us, is it? This, it's not really our preference to fall from the position of hunter and into the position of prey.”

This young lady nodded her head. It was the same for this young lady as well, in regards to not having a hobby of being hunted down.

“His Lordship gave this young lady an order. To not fight against the Imperial Princess of Habsburg. In other words, His Lordship does not wish for us to obtain a decisive win, nor does he wish for us to pretend as if we had met a decisive defeat.”

“Then?”

“Chaos. Solely that.”

This young lady declared.

“His Lordship desires solely for chaos to spread throughout these plains. That is the command that was given to us by His Lordship.”

This young lady lamented deeply.

Was this not an absurd lord? He did not order this young lady, who was no more than 17-years-old now, to win the battle, nor did he tell this young lady to lose convincingly, instead, he had commanded for this young lady to solely turn the entire battleground into a medley of discord. What is this young lady supposed to do about that sort of precise order given by His Lordship? Although this young lady had once contemplated about what she should do, this young lady’s decision had already been determined.

“Since this young lady is a faithful subject of sublimity, this young lady can only follow orders. Captain, sound the horns. You have done a good job obtaining only trivial benefits for the past 4 days. From this point forth, our forces shall genuinely turn this battlefield into a disaster.”

“Ahahahah—.”

The leader of the Royal Guard, Humbaba, laughed.

“That’s good, chaos. That’s really really good. That’s one of the

things which the likes of us love the most. Similar to how a pig needs to be shoved into some mud in order for it to understand that it's a piglet, humans need to roll around in pools of blood for a bit in order for them to realize that they're human bastards. We will more than gladly turn people into people alongside the General!"

All at once, the witches took out a horn. Several sounds of horns rose into the sky like smoke.

Due to the sudden shower at dawn, the clouds were heavy and the sky was low. The sound easily reached the dark clouds made of moisture. The world was dark and the soldiers ended their break and raised their bodies like shadows. This young lady mounted her black horse and gazed out into the front line.

The wind blew. It was a wind that contained spring.

Because it had rained on intervals for the past several days, the front line was damp and saturated. The scent of early spring was dense, making it seem as if the meadow was soon going to be entirely painted over with a yellowish green color. This young lady felt as if there may be a scent of blood out there that even this natural paint could not possibly color or cover completely. Dyeing the world green was the jurisdiction of the season, and the supervision of coloring the earth red was this young lady's task.

"Flag bearers forward."

"Roger that. Flag bearers fooodorward!"

The witches hopped onto their brooms and lightly rose upwards. They became singers of the dark clouds' undersides and started to sing our war song. In response to that, the soldiers of the ground chanted in unison. We showed off that the battle, which was anguish and lament on the other side, was nothing more than a single type of **melody** to us.

"All forces. Advance."

And thus, our unit advanced.

The field of battle was systematic. The army of a hundred thousand and the army of a hundred thousand were both standing in formation and approached one another as so. Since it was obvious that if a single unit were to abruptly rush forward, they would immediately be ganged up on, be it the enemy forces or the allied forces, they were all having a battle of wits. While breaking free from the very center, this young lady ordered.

“All forces. Continue to advance.”

The witches laughed and repeated my order.

“Continue to advaaaaance!”

In a single moment, our troops protruded from the army of a hundred thousand, the Crescent Alliance encampment and went forward. It was evident that the other Demon Lords’ units in the distance were showing signs of confusion. There were even people who sent messengers, questioning us on what we think we were doing. After telling the messengers ‘Understood, we shall adjust our speed’, and sending them back, this young lady emotionlessly gave another command.

“Advance at maximum speed.”

“Advance at maximuum speeeeed!”

Now then.

Although His Lordship was a butcher-like man among bastards, that man was this young lady’s one and only lord. The man who had found solely this young lady within this vast continent and took her in. The person who had become this young lady’s new family. It would be good to know that this young lady will not lightly overlook the crime of them having dared to imprison this young lady’s lord, man, and family, into a pig cage.

It did not matter whether they were the Crescent Alliance or the Crusaders. Come at this young lady altogether. You all are nothing more than mere audiences, is that not so?

This battle is simply a melody for His Lordship performed by this young lady.

▯ **Demon Lord of Immortality, Rank 8th, Barbatos**
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 7
Bruno Plains, The Right Wing of the Army of the Crescent Alliance

Aaah. This isn't fun.

This really, really isn't fun———.

From start to end, this war hasn't proceeded as I wanted it to.

We've been facing off against the imperial army of Habsburg since a couple of days ago, but these guys aren't moving like I want them to.

Did they say her name was the Imperial Princess Elizabeth? This person, she doesn't come out rashly even if we mess with her, and she comes after us wholeheartedly whenever we back off. She was well-versed with the fundamentals of tactics.

A sound enemy was one of the most detestable existences out there, second to a fragile ally. Mmmm. I predict this will be a prolonged war……. Well, we can just hold out by pillaging whatever supplies we lack. It's not a particular problem. As I suspected, this lacked a type of boom, a splendidly explosive feeling.

Regardless of that, we couldn't ignore that imperial army and leave them be. We did so a couple of times before, but each time I spectated them from the side, they really wreaked havoc. Both the Mountain Faction and the Neutral Faction had already been defeated by the Imperial Princess Elizabeth once. Fuck. This damn regretful world. I'm the only reliable ally here.

……No, if we're only going to quibble about reliability, then should I also acknowledge that human bitch?

Laura De Farnese.

The girl, who Dantalian had brought from who knows where and had abruptly appointed as his acting general, surely resembled that master of hers exactly since her rudeness was on point.

She wasn't going to war seriously. This was something you could tell right when you looked at her. That girl was enjoying the war.

She could have pulled the enemy in and annihilated them with ease, but she would just torment them for 3 hours and then let them go. The reason was probably simple. It was because it'd be a waste if she swallowed them right off the bat. Her intent, to lacerate them a little bit at a time and harass them until they've been squeezed dry, emanated from her like a rising smoke. As a single respectable military commander, I could affirm.

She was trash—.

Complete trash—.

For what reason were even Dantalian's vassals filled to the brim with trash? People say that master and servant were usually alike, and this was exactly that case. We have to purge him at some point, but that Paimon bitch keeps intervening.

“Haaa.”

A sigh came out on its own.

I have to exterminate the human race, I have to annihilate the enemy forces, I have to kill Paimon, and I have to stomp an appropriate amount of manners into Dantalian, there are so many things I have to do, and yet time keeps passing by slowly. At this rate, I'm afraid that things will still be this way even after another 500 years flows by.

Well, a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. If you exclude the fact that that single step was annoyingly tiresome. With

immensely tired eyes, I stared out into the front line and contemplated where we should go in order to fight.

At that moment.

“.....?”

A single army within the Crescent Alliance started to move. After using magic to enhance my eyesight, I could see a black flag with two lines written on it using silver thread.

Authority for blood.

Blood for authority.

Without a doubt, that fucking cheesy maxim belonged to only one individual, Dantalian. In other words, that means that human bitch has made her troops advance.

They crawled all the way to the center of the plain and openly started to put down wooden fences there. Should I call it a defensive position? In any case, the earth was weak to no end because it had rained for several days, so even if they set up fences there, those fences were fated to soon collapse. In the center of the field, which was completely deserted, that human child's unit started to set up their position.

“.....Haah? Fuck. What are those guys trying to pull?”

I turned around and asked. The Demon Lords of the Plains Faction were standing there. My subordinates exchanged glances with one another but they were unable to say anything. That was obvious. There wasn't anyone civil enough to ordinarily interpret that sort of absurd action within our faction.

“Just what kind of bitch is that bitch supposed to be? Aang? Does she seriously see the battlefield as some sort of playground? If that lord of hers is in prison, then she should just be docile, but why is she going completely insane on her own again?”

“.....”

My subordinates hesitantly tried to avoid answering. However, since there was someone among them who had their head on straight, or at the very least, tried to keep it on straight, he spoke with a voice filled with suspicion.

“.....Although I am afraid to judge a person’s intention rashly, no matter how you look at it, are they not trying to provoke the enemy forces?”

“Provoke?”

“Yes. For the past couple of days, a considerable number of human armies have been done in by them already. After sustaining damage from a girl, who’s no older than 17 years old, it must be difficult for them to bear that fact because of the thick sense of pride those humans have. If they provoke the humans so gallantly like that, then even if it risks their dignity, the humans would have no other choice but to come out.”

Hmm.

It isn’t a completely ridiculous logic.

The problem was if that provocation actually worked properly. Despite their looks, the humans have a massive army of a hundred thousand. They say that a considerable number of their army was mixed with ragtag groups, but that was the same for our side, as well. Even if there were ragtag groups mixed in the human forces, it was obvious that the girl’s army of 7,000 wouldn’t possibly be able to last if a massive army of a hundred thousand were to approach them.

In any case, thanks to her rushing forward like that, our slack

military camp, that was connected by the left wing-center army-right wing, had broken apart. If a hole forms in the center army just like that, then the ones that'll have to carry the burden will be us since we're holding the rest of the formation.

Aaah……. It can't be helped. Since it's bothersome, I moved my hand half-heartedly.

“Oi, be prepared to fill in the hole that bitch is going to leave. Zepar, lead our reserve troops and be prepared to move to the center if need be.”

“Yes, Your Excellency.”

The thousands of reserve soldiers under my command immediately departed. The inside of my mouth tasted bitter. However, it was better for our military power to diminish a bit if it meant that we could prevent the center army from collapsing.

After concluding the decision like that, I was about to draw out in my head today's war strategy, but, drip, something fell down onto my neck. It was cold. Once I looked up towards the sky, several drops of rain started to descend. It fell yesterday and the day before that, making it so that the early spring rain simply felt wearisome now.

“……?”

Wait.

Rain?

An incentive using rain?

———My mind cleared up instantly.

At any rate, the earth has continued to soak up moisture due to the rain this entire time. Several places throughout the battlefield were engulfed in muddy water. If rain were to fall here once more, then be it the human army or us Crescent Alliance, the number of tactics we

can utilize will be narrowed down extremely. Especially in terms of offense and not defense. I furrowed my brow and glared at that girl's unit that had, at some point, finished establishing their defensive formation far out into the front line.

“.....Don't tell me, they're?”

In that moment, the sound of a horn resonated boisterously from the other side of the plain. Once I turned my head, the human armies had finally executed a charge. Because of the rain, they were charging with the cavalry positioned at the front instead of the aerial mages. After witnessing that, any fragment of drowsiness that remained within me had vanished completely and I stood up from my spot.

“Ah, fuck. That bitch started something.”

“Pardon?”

My subordinates' gazes all focused on me at once. Though I really don't like it. Though I seriously don't like going to battle while being dragged around, not by my own will, but by someone else's, regardless of that, I had to give the order.

“Get ready to go to battle, you morons! It's a battle of annihilation.
[2] An encirclement battle of annihilation, at that!”

▯ **Demon Lord of Benevolence, Rank 9th, Paimon**

Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 7

Bruno Plains, The Left Wing of the Army of the Crescent Alliance

“.....This is.”

A breath escaped from this lady's lips unintentionally.

The progress of battle moved urgently. Until just a short moment ago, things were not flowing like this. The left wing and the right wing will each handle a single army and carry out a close-pitched battle. Without a doubt, we had planned to carry out the first assault with that sort of standard tactic today.....

However, after the unit, led by the girl known as Farnese, had protruded forward, the flow had changed completely.

That girl was the very person who had gone forward to give the speech as the representative of the Crescent Alliance, despite being a human. In the enemy's perspective, she was a traitor who they had to deal with as soon as possible. If they are able to obtain Farnese's head, then that would most likely be considered as the greatest merit. A tempting game.

Having become blinded by that, the human armies had thoughtlessly ordered their cavalries to charge. At first, the Kingdom of Polish-Lithuania, then the Empire of Francia, Republic of Batavia, Kingdom of Teuton..... Each army, contesting for military merits, sent in their cavalry.

It was that very action that was a poor move.

The cavalries, that charged in simultaneously from all sides, were unable to link together properly, and they were unable to even obtain a wide space. The weather was especially bad. After adding more rain

to the earth that was already filled with moisture, the ground had turned marshy. Once tens of thousands of hooves passed over that muddy water——— the earth instantly became a quagmire similar to that of a soft and wet swamp.

The thing that fell upon the enemy cavalry regiment, which had fallen into the mire and was floundering, was a continuous rain of bolts from the crossbowmen who were placed at the front of Farnese's unit, making it seem as if she had been waiting for this moment the entire time. Because their front was obstructed by a mire and their rear was blocked by the approaching reinforcements from the other armies, the cavalry, which consisted of no less than ten thousand men, was literally slaughtered.

“.....”

This lady was petrified.

That, was not a battle.

.....Similar to our Crescent Alliance, the Crusaders of mankind were nothing more than a loose alliance. They did not have a unity of command. Once the cavalries started to be slaughtered, some nations ordered for them to retreat, while other nations sent in more cavalries in order to save their comrades who were in danger. For the second time, the withdrawing cavalries and the advancing calvaries collided against one another.

The screams coming from the enemy troops could be heard from even here. A countless number of corpses were sprawled out over the plain that had, at some point, become a mud flat, and heavy rain struck down on those bodies from above. This lady, having even forgotten about commanding her own troops momentarily, merely watched in astonishment as the fighting power of the enemy's mighty cavalry melted away.....

—— Buuuuuu.

I wonder if they were unable to bear and witness the situation any longer.

Several horns, sounding the charge, echoed from all over the Crusaders' encampment. In that same moment, infantries, in a tremendous amount that cannot possibly be compared to the small number of cavalries, advanced forward.

Although each flag was from a different nation, the flags were all heading towards a single location, to Farnese's unit. In order to save their cavalry, and in order to get revenge on the despicable slaughterer, the commanders of the Crusaders had finally sent in all of their infantry troops. Even if it was difficult to see due to the heavy rain, it appeared as if their military strength was about 50,000.

Certainly, one could only lose if faced against that massive number of military strength. Farnese's troops finally started to withdraw. Leaving alone the floundering cavalry, who were still stuck in the mire, Farnese's unit slowly drew back.

In Farnese's point of view, it must have been a bitter retreat since it was as if she were handing a fish, which she had already caught completely, to the enemy. As if they had become fired up by the fact that Farnese's unit was retreating, the infantrymen of the Crusaders became even more elated and continued their advance. Farnese's troops slowly retreated further into the rear, and the infantrymen of the Crusaders slowly entered deeper into our side.

“.....”

One moment.

Was it truly a bitter retreat?

A lightning-like realization struck this lady's head. This lady unintentionally let out a gasp.

“It cannot be……!”

If this was what she was aiming for from the very beginning, then that Farnese girl was truly a preposterous monster. There was no way. But……. But, if one were to look over the course of events of the battlefield once more, then without a doubt, it had met the conditions. Regardless of whether Farnese had intended this or not, the order that this lady must give was incredibly obvious……!

“All forces!”

This lady raised her fan and commanded.

“Spread out our forces! Spread it out as wide as possible! From this point forth, our troops shall become the left wing of a crane wing formation and encircle the enemy forces from the left side!”

“Hm? What’s wrong all of a sudden, sis?”

Sitri, who was preparing for battle, tilted her head. As always, she had a naive face which also only contained a quizzical look as if she were unable to understand the situation that well. This lady explained urgently, however, while also fully being cautious to not be impatient.

“Look over there. Farnese’s unit is retreating. The infantrymen of the Crusaders are doing their all in order to chase after her. If Farnese is able to properly lure in all of the enemy infantrymen…….”

“…….”

It was then that Sitri’s eyes started to shine amusingly.

“……Heehee. A bottleneck state will take place. Only a single unit is retreating, but since there are a countless number of troops chasing after them, they’ll naturally gather into a single spot.”

That was it!

Truly, Sitri was normally a peerlessly dull girl, but when the topic

became related to battle, she would transform into a completely different person who was also very sharp. This lady, while her mind was still blazing, ordered once more.

“Everyone prepare to carry out an encirclement battle of annihilation!”

Most certainly, even Barbatos must have realized the real intention behind the situation that was unfolding right before us. Since that child, regardless of other things, was at least gifted with a damn sharp instinct when it came to war!

If Barbatos spreads out the right wing and this lady spreads out the left wing, then Farnese will lure the enemy in on her own into the encirclement. This was a race against time. If we are able to complete the encirclement before Farnese can be pierced by the enemy’s advance, then it will be our outright victory. If the enemy forces are able to crush Farnese before we are able to complete the encirclement, then it will be our utter defeat. An outright victory or an utter defeat. Although this lady does not have a hobby of gambling, it was in a moment like this where it was a military commander’s duty to make a wager!

The streaks of rain were becoming thicker. Due to the wet fog and heavy rain, everyone’s fields of vision were starting to narrow slowly. This was good fortune, as well. The chances of the enemies being unable to notice us completing the encirclement on our side rises. Moreover, if they are blinded by military merit…… then this battle, there is a chance of winning!

This lady hurried the captains once more.

“Everyone, there is no time to hesitate. We must quickly———.”

□ Demon Lord of Immortality, Rank 8th, Barbatos
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 7
Bruno Plains, The Right Wing of the Army of the Crescent Alliance

“———Quickly spread out our forces already! You damn wusses!”

While personally kicking the butts of my subordinates, I shouted in a loud voice. Although, as much as this was a tactic that we didn't plan beforehand, so the soldiers were showing just as much confusion, fuck, this wasn't the time to quibble over something like that. There was a need to move quickly even if it meant I had to hit these clumsy simpletons in the balls!

“Y-Your Excellency. My apologies, but if you can provide us with the reason…….”

“If those are eyes attached to that mug of yours, then look for yourself, you bastard.”

I grabbed him by his collar and forced his gaze towards the front line.

“What do you see past that human girl's troops?”

“……I-I see a lot of enemy infantrymen?”

“That's right. Not just a lot of infantrymen, but infantrymen that are approaching fucking recklessly while concentrated in a single spot. We're also a mess, but those humans are even more of a mess than we are. They have no other choice but to be like that since they have a commander for each nation.”

Smack, I hit his cheek.

“Now here’s a question. Infantrymen are approaching us while concentrated in a single point. They’re so concentrated that they can barely even raise their swords properly. Moreover, they’re also blinded by the desire to take that human girl’s head. Conveniently, it seems we’re standing at the right wing? What should we do then, Mr. Stonehead?”

“.....”

My stupid subordinate slowly opened his eyes wide.

“.....We have to encircle them, Your Excellency.”

“That’s right, you dullard. One plus one equals two, and the enemy infantrymen, that are pursuing into our side because they’ve been blinded by military merit, are prey that we have to shatter completely. If you understand, then hurry up and spread out in a crane wing formation. Okay? We’ll become the right wing of the crane wing formation and wrap up those idiotic human armies.”

“But, Your Excellency. An encirclement cannot be completed if we are the only ones to move. Those Mountain Faction fellows, who are handling the left side, must also go along with this plan in order for us.....”

I struck my subordinate’s cheek once more.

“Paimon may be a crazy bitch, but she isn’t an incompetent bitch. If that bitch was actually incompetent, then her head would have been severed by my hands a long time ago. Fuck, we’ve been on 6 Crescent Alliance expeditions together, and the number of times we’ve gone to civil war against one another is 14! At the very least, her wit is much better than yours so stop worrying about others——— Idiots! What are you doing!? Move quickly!”

Slaaap.

I struck my subordinate’s cheek for the final time.

Only then did everyone collect themselves before they proceeded to hastily move the troops. Shouts echoed from here and there and messengers moved busily. As it always has been, and as it always will be, a battle of encirclement was a fight against time. If we're late, then our center army will be breached and thus result in us being torn apart instead. This was an optimum opportunity.

But.

“.....”

I didn't like this.

If perhaps, this encirclement battle of annihilation were to succeed, then that would make it so that that human child had commanded and controlled this battle from start to finish. Was that possible? It was impossible for even me, who has been referred to as a brave general for hundreds of years and praised as courageous, to perform such a stunt. In the first place, in order for that kind of feat to be possible, **one must be gifted with something different.**

Dantalian.

You, just what sort of monster have you raised.....!?

▯ **A King's Lone Sword, Human, Laura De Farnese**
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 7
Bruno Plains, The Center of the Army of the Crescent Alliance

The battle had entered into its final stage. Everything was flowing smoothly.

Our side was able to encircle the enemy troops on three fronts. Although the enemy soldiers did their best to breach our center, it was pointless. There was a time where we were almost pushed back, but my troops were elites. We regained our formation in a matter of moments and retaliated. It was safe to say that half the progress of battle was now over.

“Mm.”

Demon Lord Barbatos and Demon Lord Paimon. The commanders of both respective wings have just now finished the crane wing formation. With this, our forces' superiority has been placed on an unshakeable foundation.

If the enemy still had their entire cavalry, then they could have been able to aim for a turnabout. However, the majority of the enemy cavalries were used up during the initial phase of the battle. Not only that but a massive wall of mud had formed behind them, so even the enemy infantries' escape route had been sealed. Now the enemy forces were unable to move forward, left, right, or backward. This situation was what it meant to be surrounded on all sides.

—— Woooooosh…….

The heavy rain continued to pour while not showing any signs of it stopping anytime soon. The visibility of the battlefield was becoming enshrouded. This young lady's line of vision was unable to stretch out far and was forced to stop by the obstruction of the rain. At each and every location this young lady's vision stopped, an enemy's corpse was sprawled there. It was a spasm-like death, and it was a life that felt as if someone were shaking off their disgust.

The witches giggled while taking in the rain.

"A masterpiece. This is a masterpiece. Look. Humans are dying off while swimming in waters of shit. A scenery like this is hard to find!"

"Yup, ever since we started to follow Lord Dantalian around, every single day has been so enjoyable that it's troubling to live. There are many occasions of witches lamenting because of the fact that it's difficult for them to die, but an occasion where they lament because it's difficult for them to live is rare. In that regard, Lord Dantalian is quite the big shot."

"His lower tool is a big shot, too."

"Waaait a second. Everyone stop. How do you know thaaat? If I'm not misunderstanding, then that tone almost sounds as if you've seen master's naked body before."

"No no, big sis Humbaba. That's a misunderstanding. No matter how much we latch onto His Greater Being and beg of him to let us have a taste, he never bestows upon us his royal grace. However, in terms of observation and not watching directly, we were able to look at it a couple of times before. Fortunately, we were more or less able to observe master's tool."

"That means you stole a look!"

"Is there a problem with that?"

"Pillage the things we can't have and peek at the things we can't see. That's the honorable pride of us witches."

“If I recall correctly, then we’re master’s Royal Guard, and if I haven’t gone insane, then the duty of the Royal Guard is to safely protect master’s royal body, right? But when you bitches are near master, far from his royal body being safe, is this feeling that his royal body falls even further into danger just my imagination?”

“That’s your imagination.”

“An outrageous misunderstanding.”

“That’s a blazing groundless rumor.”

“You terribly insane bitches! I love you, my sisters!”

Ahahah, the Captain of the Royal Guard turned this way while laughing.

“Your Excellency, Acting Generaaal, please give us the final order. We are, at all times, ready to rush out and slaughter those people. This will be easier than, well, just hunting a bunch of turkeys.”

A command to charge, is it?

Those words mean that the captain wishes to annihilate the enemy forces. That was not strange. As long as you have stepped out into battle, it was obvious to long for victory, and as long as you were achieving victory, it was reasonable to desire a complete victory or a great victory. However, battle meant something else for this young lady. It was art and music.

The flower of battle did not come from obtaining victory or defeat. The cries of the soldiers when victory approached, and the anguish of the soldiers when defeat was right at their doorsteps. It was those voices that sublimated war into music.

In order for life to become a single melody, it must cross over a countless number of gaps. However, in a battleground, each and every life became a melody and a tune. Whether one could understand this or not, that was the decisive difference between the

witches and this young lady.

“Your Excellency?”

This young lady did not respond to the Captain of the Royal Guard’s prodding. Instead, this young lady shut her eyes further and listened to the surroundings a bit more carefully.

Now then, listen well.

To the tune in the center of the clamor of raindrops falling down onto the muddy water, the melody that distinctly flows between that sound of water———.

"Damn it. Move! I said move aside!" "You son of a bitch, there's no place to move so what do you expect me to—." "Save me!" "Do not yield! You fools, the way out is not back but forward! We'll live if we can breach that point, and we'll die if we can't!" "Charge! Charge forward! Follow m—." "Mother." "One, two. One, two. One, two." "Nevertheless, the Gods will not throw us away. My comrades, do not be afraid. Do farewells last forever? Do partings last forever?" "Fuck." "General! Where's the general!?" "I can't see." "Hurrah for the great nation of Francia! Hurrah for His Majesty the Emperor!" "That's a fucker's great Francia and His Majesty the Emperor." "My sword." "Oi." "One, two. One, two. One, two." "This guy is already dead, though?" "Didn't things become like this because of those country bumpkins from Brittany!?" "Good. That is it. Push with all of your might while keeping with the rhythm. Breaking through is possible. We can breakthrough!" "Look here. I'll be going first." "I'm dying. Fuck……." "I surrender! Spare me! I, surrender! I, know how to speak, your language! I give up!" "What's he doing?" "Like I said, those words." "It means submission." "I submit!" "Save me!" "My eyes can't see." "That fucking son of a bitch baron. The fact that I believed that bastard's words and followed him here, it must have been an epileptic……." "Puha!" "Just move aside!" "Move as much as you want after I croak, you fucking trash." "I am a slave. I am not, your enemy! A friend of slaves! Hurrah for, Miss General Farnese!" "We got through!" "They say that they got through over there!" "Not there! That is not right! Be still. Do not push! Do not pu—." "For Her Majesty the Queen!" "Our king is honestly not that great of a person to cheer for him before death……." "One, two. One, two……." "With more strength!" "Everyone has died. Brother, this is it." "I heard you can't pass on to the afterlife gracefully if you die by the hands of demons. Let us go honorably." "I can't see." "Friend of slave! I, slave!" "Wow. Fuck. Shit. Damn it. How am I still hungry even though there's a hole in my stomach? What am I supposed to do if I'm hungry even after I die? Fuck. Seriously, what am I supposed to……." "One." "Two." "Just what do you know about the king?" "Yeah. What could he possibly know?" "Puha, I did write my will when they told me to, but there's no one to give it to." "That wretch." "That dog-like bitch……!" "Fuck, I'll take that bitch's head before I die!" "Kill!" "Kill her!" "What will change if we kill her?" "Regardless, we still have to kill her." "But we'll be the ones to die." "One, two……." "Mother." "I heard they would spare your life if you surrender, but." "I told you to kill them, you mother fuckers!" "Wow, look at the rain fall. It's nice." "Ah." "Mother." "I, am a slave."

Aah.

Aah, aaaah.

How beautiful.

How incredibly beautiful.

“.....”

Shudder.

This young lady hugged her own shoulders and trembled slightly. With the heart inherited from His Lordship and with the head given to this young lady by His Lordship, this young lady was narrowly able to recognize that beauty.

Although this young lady was cold all the way to her inner bones due to the icy rain, since the inner flesh of this young lady's body was already filled to the brim with a pleasant feeling, the cold shivering had no way to replace this young lady's shivering and there were no other gaps for it to fill, either. By shuddering, this young lady was complete.

Ah.

This young lady did not open her eyes, she could not bear to do so since she did not wish to escape from this dark joy. This young lady wished to remain here a little while longer before departing.

Victory and defeat had no meaning whatsoever to this young lady. Solely the screams of death, the screams to live, and the moans of the people who were unable to live or die, these things were what gave meaning to this young lady. Within this world of achromatic colors, solely those vibrations were life, death, and music, all at the same time. During the days this young lady spent reading only history books within a dust-covered library of a small room, this young lady was incapable of knowing this pleasure. The delight of performing

with the life and death of tens of thousands by herself. If His Lordship had not informed this young lady of it, then she would have most likely been forever oblivious.

“Uhm, Your Excellency? You have to give the order to charge in order for…….”

“Our troops shall not move.”

“Paaardon?”

How noisy. Do not make a retort needlessly, witch. Does unnecessary noise not get mixed in while this young lady is trying to appreciate this long-awaited moment of tens of thousands of melodies?

There is only a single reason why your head is still attached to your neck. It is because His Lordship had welcomed you as his family. This young lady was not unaware of His Lordship’s image of Miss Lapis as the mother, himself as the father, and his desire for this young lady to lead her sisters, the witches, as the eldest sister of the family. That was why this young lady was taking care of you troublemakers, who were unknowledgeable of military discipline, with sisterly affection.

This young lady narrowly opened her eyes.

“I said that we shall not move our forces. Advancing lightly right now is not advisable. Captain, can you not hear it?”

This young lady raised her finger and pointed towards the enemy soldiers who were encircled and being slaughtered up ahead. The captain followed this young lady’s gesture and turned her head. Although the two of us were looking at the same place, it was evident that we were not seeing the same thing.

“This young lady can hear Franconian. This young lady can hear the language of Batavia. As this young lady can hear the dialect of Sardinia, the sound of Teutonic can be heard as well. The thing that gets mixed in occasionally is most likely Polish-Lithuanian. ———

However, there is no language of Habsburg. The words that are spoken by the people of Habsburg, the nation that is led by the Imperial Princess known as Elizabeth, solely that cannot be heard.”

“.....”

The Captain of the Royal Guard, Humbaba, tilted her head.

“.....All this one can hear with her ears is the clutter of screaming. My God. Is Your Excellency able to hear all of that? You can understand every single language that exists on the continent? That’s amazing.”

This young lady clicked her tongue. This was why words did not get through.

Mastering every primary language was a study that people must do rudimentally as they live. It was obvious. If you did not, then you would be unable to read books. This was something His Lordship agreed to, as well.

“Captain, although this young lady is grateful for your kind words, there is no need for you to once again remind this young lady of her prominence. This young lady being smart and you being foolish is not the issue. There is a necessity to pay attention to another fact right now.”

“.....Master and servant really do resemble one another. There’s a reason behind everything master does. He didn’t put aside the other races and appoint a human into his acting general without reason.”

The captain muttered. Judging from the atmosphere, it seems she had just wrapped this young lady and His Lordship into one and insulted us together, but it was not something that this young lady was unable to understand. Essentially, geniuses were bound to receive the envy and jealousy from the mediocrity. This young lady magnanimously accepted the captain’s overgrown personality.

“And sooo? Oh, prominent Your Excellency Acting General. Why

should the likes of us not execute a charge just because the language of Habsburg isn't mixed with the rambling of those low people?"

"I will say it again. This young lady is a genius. In regards to language, music, and military affairs, this young lady boasts her unrivaled capabilities. This fact is evident if you look at how this young lady had controlled this battlefield of 200,000 soldiers, adding the enemy and ally troops together, with merely 7,000 officers and men."

"Yes, yes. Even this one, before becoming ignoble, was once held in high expectation as a mage that was going to shoulder the next generation. So what?"

"Sincerely, it seems you are unable to make any sense of what this young lady says. Think about it. Did His Lordship not warn this young lady, who was like that, to **never fight against** the Imperial Princess Elizabeth?"

"....."

Captain Humbaba frowned. Surely. It seems she was still unable to understand. At this point, since it had leaped over the degree of disturbing one's music appreciation, and had entered the level of having completely ruined the concert, this young lady was displeased. However, this young lady kindly divulged her foolish younger sister with the self-evident truth.

"Captain. You have been with His Lordship ever since this young lady had been held as a slave, is that not so?"

"Yes. That's right."

"Before His Lordship had discovered and appointed this young lady, no one in the world was aware that this young lady had military talent. Including this young lady herself. Is that not so?"

"Yes. That's also true."

“If that is the case, then thinking logically, regardless of whether His Lordship’s preference in women is rotten, his ability to discern capable personnel, would it not be correct to assume that his ability to recognize talented people is peerless?”

“.....That’s right, isn’t it?”

“Therefore, under the premise that His Lordship’s judgment is correct, that means that the Imperial Princess is a type of being that is either as smart as this young lady or someone who comes close to it. The imperial army of Habsburg, which is led by that sort of outstanding individual, is **coincidentally** not within that encirclement. What could that mean? Do you think that the Imperial Princess suddenly felt bored and decided to take her entire army to go on a walk?”

“.....”

“Do not only believe in the things you can see, Captain. A battlefield is a place where you fight utilizing the things which you cannot see as much as you do with the things you can. During this time of all times where everyone’s fields of vision are narrowed by wet fog———.”

This young lady turned her gaze.

Past the earth and the sky where rain streaks fell, this young lady predicted that something was approaching. It was not similar to that of a mere prophetic feeling. This young lady had an intuition that was capable of jumping to a conclusion immediately if provided with properly established grounds.

“———It is impossible for an individual with a talent that is as impressive as this young lady’s, to miss this opportunity.”

The Imperial Princess Elizabeth had been waiting.

While making the rain into a natural curtain.

For this moment where she could ascend as a hero by herself in this

battleground where defeat seemed certain.

Shortly after, this young lady's intuition had hit the mark. They appeared like ghosts riding on warhorses, breaching through the streaks of rain, and struck at the left and right wings of our friendly forces. The cavalry that charged with fluttering purple mantles were, without a doubt, the imperial army of Habsburg. The forces of the Crescent Alliance on both wings did not expect that the enemy armies would still have cavalry troops left, resulting in them being assaulted from the rear without being able to show much of a resistance.

“Ah.”

A gasp flowed out from the captain's lips. A scenery that could only be described by the sporadic utterance of ‘Ah’, but barely at that, unfolded before us. The outer area of the Crescent Alliance, that had achieved a perfect encirclement annihilation formation, had collapsed. The enemy soldiers, who were merely waiting to be slaughtered within the encirclement, cheered for the reinforcements that had appeared abruptly and squeezed out what remaining strength they had left.

The ranks of both the enemy forces and the friendly forces were chaotically mixed together. By nature, it was difficult to re-establish a line of command that had fallen once. Would it even be possible during this current situation where rain was falling noisily in all directions? Although Barbatos and Paimon desperately tried to rebuild the blockade, unfortunately, they had already missed the prime opportunity. The majority of the enemy soldiers were escaping with their lives. Past the streaks of rain, across the wet fog.

“Mhm.”

With vague eyes, this young lady watched the things that were running away. The ongoing tune of the enemy forces' escape, which slowly grew fainter and fainter, was pitiful and beautiful. Captain Humbaba blankly stared at the face of this young lady who was in that state.

“.....Your Excellency Acting General.”

“This young lady apologizes, Captain. This instant is just the right moment, after all. Please keep your mouth shut for exactly 2 minutes. If you do not stay quiet, then there is a chance that this young lady will kill you.”

“.....”

2 minute had passed.

This young lady was satisfied.

“Okay. What were you curious about this time?”

“Yes. Your Excellency Acting General said so before today’s battle. That our unit will not win, but we will not lose, either. That we will only spread confusion throughout the battlefield. By those words, did you perhaps mean.....”

“Mm. That is correct.”

This young lady nodded her head.

“Although bringing forth the encirclement battle of annihilation was this young lady’s achievement and meritorious deed, it was Barbatos and Paimon’s mistake and wrongdoing for it being ruined. This young lady did not obtain victory, but she did not experience defeat, either.”

“.....”

“Barbatos and Paimon both must be embarrassed. Barbatos, who had called this young lady a criminal of high treason and tried to punish her, must especially feel ashamed. If she tries to punish His Lordship in a military trial now, then Barbatos’ honor will be the only thing to fall down a bottomless pit. She will be unable to avoid the criticism that she had disgracefully shifted the blame of her own loss to another Demon Lord, after all.”

“.....uh. Wait a moment, Your Excellency. For starters, despite being fully aware that the Crescent Alliance’s encirclement was going to fail, did Your Excellency still keep us here playing around in the center army?”

“That is the case.”

“That’s a bit troubling. I’m not saying this because I particularly cherish our allies, but wouldn’t it have been better to just go in and change the defeat to a victory?”

This young lady tilted her head.

“Why is that?”

“That’s obvious. This is a war that has already occurred so, while we’re at it, it would be more satisfying if our forces win.”

This young lady could only tilt her head once more. It was difficult to understand what exactly the captain was trying to say. This young lady, while redacting an incredibly obvious truth and a tremendously proper common sense, pointed out.

“Captain. Just how are Barbatos and Paimon this young lady’s allies?”

“Pardon?”

“Barbatos tried to frame and get rid of His Lordship. Likewise, Paimon tried to use His Lordship as a mere political tool. Therefore, the two Demon Lords are obviously this young lady’s enemies. Even if we do not act, the Imperial Princess of the Empire is willingly offering to defeat those two people, so why should this young lady intervene needlessly there? Taking control of a group by using another group. In any case, if the Imperial Princess wishes to breach the encirclement, then she has no other choice but to attack either or both wings of our formation, instead of this young lady’s center army, which is quite the distance away. So it is fine for this young lady to leisurely spectate as they exchange blows on their own.”

There was no one who would criticize this young lady for being passive just because she had stood by idly as the encirclement fell apart. The one who had decided upon herself to become the vanguard and stand at the forefront, since the initial phase of the battle, was none other than this young lady.

Went forward as the spearhead, put the majority of the enemy cavalry in a deadlock, and adding to that, this young lady had contributed the decisive service which allowed the completion of the encirclement. No matter what anyone says now, the individual to have done the greatest distinguished service for our forces was this young lady. If you wish to criticize this young lady, then try.

“Furthermore.”

And this young lady continued.

“It would be boring to win quickly. In any case, it has already been determined that between the enemy and this young lady, the side to obtain victory will be this young lady. However, would it not be less of a waste if we were to consume them as moderately as possible?”

“.....”

The Captain of the Royal Guard, Humbaba’s face became vacant again. As she adjusted her cone hat, that was completely drenched by the rain, she muttered to herself.

“.....Now I know for certain. There’s only a bunch of lunatics around our master. Miss Lapis and even Her Excellency Acting General, they’re all in a category that’s a thousand steps away from being normal. It seems I’m the only sane person near master. Certainly, I have to be the one to take care of him.”

“Haah?”

“Yess?”

The time on the battlefield continued to flow even while we were

discussing.

Both Paimon and Barbatos' armies had restored their once collapsed formation. However, it was already too late for them to pursue after the enemy. Time that has already flowed by cannot be taken back. Similar to that, the time of the battlefield, that has already passed by, cannot be grasped once more.

Every war was a conflict that flowed hour by hour and was also a war of time. It was not strange for certain points within everyday time to be erased. On the contrary, that was a common occurrence. Similar to stepping stones that were sparsely connected, everyday time was sparsely separated. Therefore, time to a person who was living while buried under everyday life was similar to that of a person who was trying to cross stepping stones, which was an act where they must let something flow and be erased between each stone in order for them to finally cross. For those people, they slowly forget themselves as time continues to proceed, until finally, they merely end up falling completely into oblivion.

On the other hand, the time of the battlefield flowed in a way where even a single step could not be erased. People who forget themselves when they have already stepped out into war were unforgivable. The movement of the enemy soldiers, the direction of the wind that the flags fluttered accordingly to, and even the smell, fragrance, and pulsation of the heart that rose up from somewhere, one must piece together every bit of information possible and precisely snatch the flow of time. A person who rules over time also rules over the battlefield. Today, Barbatos and Paimon conclusively missed that time. The chance of victory will never return to them now.

Captain Humbaba clicked her tongue.

"That's a bit pitiable. Doesn't that mean they were just used by us in the end?"

"The owner of this war is His Lordship, the owner of this battle is

this young lady. Today's conclusion was a natural result since they had imprisoned His Lordship, despite not knowing who the owner was, and had tried to persecute this young lady. It would be good if they have realized their place now."

"Really, master and the general are the only people in the world who'd tell both the rank 8th and rank 9th Demon Lords off by telling them to know their place....."

It was at that moment. A portion of the enemy military strength, which we originally assumed to have retreated completely, appeared through the thick heavy rain and wet fog. Drenched in moisture, there was only a sparse number of enemy figures. Although this young lady narrowed her eyes, wondering if they perhaps intended to execute a surprise attack, that did not seem to be the case. The enemies merely stood still like statues.

"....."

No, rather than a surprise attack, that was.

This young lady lightly tapped the waist of the black horse and went forward. Although the sound of the Captain of the Royal Guard, Humbaba's panicking voice could be heard from behind, this young lady ignored it. This young lady headed towards the place where the enemies were waiting while being struck by the rain.

In that same moment, someone from the enemies' side came out as well while riding on a white horse, matching this young lady's pace. The opposition was black, and yet, they were also white. Even during this current weather, where dark clouds were spread throughout the sky, the other person's silver hair boundlessly shone its own color vividly. It felt as if the raindrops were making way for her.

Before this young lady could even see their outline, this young lady already knew who that person was.

Elizabeth Atanaxia Evatriae von Habsburg.

The only person that His Lordship had acknowledged as his formidable enemy. This young lady was nurtured by His Lordship with the sole purpose of taking that person's life.

That girl and this young lady arrived close to one another. As she gazed vacantly at this young lady while on top of a white horse, this young lady as well, stared at her while on top of a black horse.

It seems she had a lot of thoughts going through her head. Her face was void of emotions, but those eyes of hers contained a deeply laid plan. However, this young lady had nothing in her mind. This young lady met people all the time. It is good that this young lady was able to at least see this person with her own eyes, merely this thought went through her head.



“.....”

“.....”

Rain fell.

This young lady liked rain.

Whenever it rained, the sound of raindrops falling washed away the nuisances of the world. When rain splashed and stained this young lady's cheek, this young lady felt bleakly relieved since it felt as if there was still an outside in that place.

There was a time when this young lady thought that the various miscellaneous things of the world were tormenting her, and there was also a time when only those torturous things were laid on her mind, but the sound of rain washed those days and that time away. Since the streaks of rain were busy knocking away everything in the world, it appeared as if it did not have enough strength to obstruct this young lady. Whenever the rain fell, this young lady felt as if she were something in the world that had the least value in obstructing. This young lady breathed for a moment during this indifference of the rain.

If it disappeared without a trace.

If the trace of this body's existence disappeared, and if even the trace that it had disappeared also vanished.

“You.”

She opened her lips. A drop of rain flowed down the side of her lips, following the line of her chin. Those lips were most likely lips that His Lordship would want to kiss.

“I see that you are dead.”

“.....”

“That is not the face of a person who is alive, and those are not the eyes of a person who is alive. Did Dantalian make a doll into his general? Or did he perhaps intend to bear, not a doll, but a corpse and take care of it? What a troubling man. It seems each and every thing that man decides to take in are nothing but obstructions.”

“.....”

“I see you have little words. Since you are only glaring at myself silently, I cannot see a path to converse. In truth, it is a question whether you are even looking at me or not. What thoughts are contained in that head of yours for you to be so composed?”

This young lady gazed at the streaks of rain.

And spoke.

“The thought of wanting to kill you is going through this young lady’s head.”

She closed her mouth and showed a slightly troubled face. She then narrowed her eyes and shook her head.

“I am sorry. You cannot kill me. Not only do you lack the ability to do so, but, regardless of whether you do indeed have the ability to do so or not, fighting against me right now would be an act that would go against Dantalian’s order. Since you are a puppet, you will not defy Dantalian. Is that not so?”

“.....”

“I wished to see up close the girl that man had made into the face of his army. I see that Dantalian is proud. I can see a man who, at any cost, tries to shoulder the things which he cannot shoulder and take in the things that he does not have to take in. How does one possibly intend to save a child who has already died in the past, and likewise, how does one intend to kill that child? Is Dantalian planning to turn back time? Was a person’s time something that was reversed just because someone wished for it to happen?”

She looked up towards the raining sky.

“Pass a message on to your lord, if you will. That, after meeting your doll, I, Elizabeth von Habsburg, think she is somewhat pretty.”

She must have finished saying everything that she wanted to say since she had then turned the head of her horse. Soon after, she disappeared into the wet fog and the military personnel, which she had brought with her, vanished along with her like shadows. This young lady watched the shadow fading away within the wet fog for as long as possible.

Only a single apprehension came to this young lady's mind.

The next time we meet, this young lady will kill her.



That day's battle concluded as so.

No one was able to obtain victory and no one had been defeated. However, one hero appeared from the Crescent Alliance and the Crusaders respectively.

This young lady, Laura De Farnese.

And the Imperial Princess, Elizabeth von Habsburg.

☐ Demon Lord of Immortality, Rank 8th, Barbatos
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 7
Bruno Plains, The Right Wing of the Army of the Crescent Alliance

“.....”

Vacantly.

And in vain.

I watched the enemy soldiers disappear past the streaks of rain.

The encirclement had been breached. I had judged that it was perfect. When the thought, ‘I see that bitch Paimon’s wit hasn’t died yet’, had crossed my mind, I was already certain of our victory, but.

I was not able to predict nor was I able to block the cavalry unit of a single army that had appeared out of nowhere and stabbed into our troops like a fang. By the time I was able to narrowly disentangle the chaos and organize our ranks once more, the enemy cavalry, and adding to that, the enemy infantrymen were already running away with leisure.....

Snap.

“.....Damn it.”

Again.

Again, a decisive victory slipped through my fingers right before my eyes.

I had done quite a lot of preparations in order to start this war. I burned down a mountain range, I manipulated the press, and I was

just barely able to set straight the expedition that was about to become a failure due to old man Marbas' mistake. All the fruition, the moment where all of my sweat and blood, that I had shed until now, was going to be rewarded, was right under our noses and..... I missed it. I ended up missing the chance.

“Damn it!”

Only anger burst out of my throat.

“A little bit more, if we had pushed a little bit more..... We would have been able to acquire the earth, the farmland, and the rich plains where our kind could cultivate and survive in. Just a little bit more ———.”

Because it was regretful and remorseful.

Because of the fact that I was ridiculed by a bastard who treated war as if it were a toy like that, I was hateful.

“.....Your Excellency Barbatos.”

When my knees were about to buckle, there was a sound that grabbed me by the nape. The moment I looked around my surroundings, my subordinates, my children who I dragged all the way here until now, were watching over me. Their gazes became ropes and were just barely able to wrap around my body and pull it up.

———That's right.

I'm the pillar of the Plains Faction.

The one to have led the continuous desire of the entire demon race for 500 years.

I was our race's shadow that indiscriminately used even dirty methods if it meant that our kind could pass down a warmer land and a more fertile earth to our children. Not a commoner who

laments because the world is remorseful, but a Demon Lord who merely acts as a proxy while bearing that resentment.

It was too soon to fall.

We have only failed in a single battle.

Swallowing down the clot of blood that was rising from my throat, grabbing the will that was trying to escape from my joints and nailing them down, adding steel to my apprehension and throwing away the blade from my will, I stood up as the Demon Lord of Immortality.

“———Hm. Yeah, well. I missed it. Fuck. Whatever. That can happen. If there’s a day where we fuck someone over, then there’s also a day where someone else fucks us over. Although the Gods don’t show equality in terms of loving all beings, they’re incredibly fair when it comes to bestowing fucking misery to all people.”

I grinned.

People smile when they become cruel to someone. Since I’m constantly hard on myself, I can display laughter whenever I pleased.

“Zepar, my left atrium.”

“Yes, Your Excellency. I, Major General Zepar, am here.”

“I heard the cheers when the enemy cavalry rushed in. It was the language of Habsburg. That Elizabeth bitch must have played out some stratagem. I’ll bestow upon you my Remorseful Wolves. Chase after her until the ends of Hell and rip her to shreds.”

“.....”

Zepar bowed his head.

“As you command.”

“Yeah. Follow it well. If you fail, then just die there.”

I snapped my fingers. My shadow throbbed before spitting out 7 black maws, the maw of black beasts.

Capture pregnant mothers alive and pour curses onto them. Make them into living corpses that can neither live nor die. After gathering 100 lemures of the children born by those living corpses, the monster you get from earnestly infusing those lemures together is my exclusive familiar, the Remorseful Wolf.

There is only one way to destroy them. Only **mothers**, who have performed a stillbirth, can escape the fangs of the Remorseful Wolves. The reason why those annoying witches were able to protect Dantalian was because of that. It's obvious since if it's a witch, then they must have had experienced something like a stillbirth several times. However, if it's the noble Imperial Princess of the Habsburg Empire, then she wouldn't have even experienced pregnancy.

“Beleth, my right atrium.”

“Awaiting your command, Corps Commander.”

“There's a lowly succubus woman who always follows behind Dantalian. She should be managing the supplies in the rear. Catch that bitch and bring her before me.”

“It is not really my preference to threaten women and children. Moreover, I recall that little one being referred to as an outcast. If a luxurious gentleman, such as myself, were to touch such a lowly person, then my dignity…….”

“Do you want me to fuck up that lofty dignity of yours along with your entire body?”

“Since I was very little, I wished to capture a succubus at least once. Leave it to me.”

Rank 16th, Demon Lord Zepar, and Rank 13th, Demon Lord Beleth, the two high ranking Demon Lords that supported the Plains Faction received their respective orders and dispersed.

Zepar will most likely crush the Imperial Princess Elizabeth on his own discretion and come back. I wasn't worried even if it took several days. The problem wasn't the Imperial Princess, but rather, it was Dantalian.

I was absolutely certain that that human child didn't operate her unit on her own. She most likely received proper instructions from Dantalian, and pulled off that shit, in order to screw us over. Even if there was no evidence, it didn't matter. My old intuition, my instincts that were trained while leaping over life and death situations tens of hundreds of times on the battlefield, was telling me this. That Dantalian and the girl, that the two of them were plotting something.

Dantalian. You were adorable since you were playing cute tricks. However, I'm constantly ready to slit your throat if you bare your teeth at me. I'll show that to you now.

Shortly after, Beleth returned with a pink haired succubus. I wonder if he had already hit her a couple of times in order to set an example since her right cheek was bruised.

“.....”

If I remembered correctly, then her name was certainly Lapis Lazuli. Even as blood dripped down the side of the mouth of this lowly outcast, she continued to glare towards my direction. She looked at me with an emotionless face as if she were admonishing me. Although we've met face to face several times whenever I came in and out of Dantalian's dwelling, no matter how many times I looked at her, I didn't like her fierce gaze.

“I have brought her, Corps Commander. This, since she wasn't a spiteful bitch by nature, I struck her a bit beforehand. Tsk. Really, it feels dirty to hit weak things.”

“Good job. Put her down here.”

“Yes. As you command.”

Thud.

Beleth put down the outcast as if he were tossing her. Since her upper body fell down first, the outcast injured her face. With a face scratched by the ground and covered in muddy water, the one who's Dantalian's lover, and also a half-breed peasant, gazed up at me.

“.....This one apologizes, Your Greater Being, but this one does not think that this is an appropriate reception. No matter how lowly this one may be, this body is one that had received His Highness Dantalian's royal grace and is also the body that is in charge of managing the rear of a single unit. Why is Your Greater Being infringing upon strict military law on Your Greater Being's own volition?”

“I have no grudge against you personally, child.”

I grabbed the outcast's hair and raised her head.

Annoyingly, this peasant hasn't displayed a single pained expression or let out a single anguished moan even once. She simply stared right into my eyes with an unwavering gaze.

“However, frustration keeps piling up towards that kid who you received your royal grace from. What to do? Even during the speech, he betrayed my trust, and he used some cheap method just so he could avoid some tiny punishment. What do you think I should do about that kid, who made that acting general of his ridicule my entire faction?”

“.....”

The outcast shut her lips. That's right. You can't answer that. You don't know the answer, either. I raised the corners of my lips.

“Yeah. I'm the same. I'm not really sure what I should do from now on. That's why, right now, I plan to visit Dantalian with you and ask him personally. Follow me, you peasant bitch.”

Dantalian. It'll be a good idea to give me a proper explanation. Not for only your own safety, but if you cherish the life of this sweetheart of yours who you love so much.

“For now, should we do some warm ups before we go visit Dantalian?”

I grinned broadly.

▯ **Demon Lord of Benevolence, Rank 9th, Paimon**

Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 7

Bruno Plains, The Left Wing of the Army of the Crescent Alliance

“.....”

Within the falling rain.

This lady gripped her wet feather fan tightly.

“.....Once more, this lady will go see Dantalian.”

This was not it.

Although this lady is unsure whether she has the right to say this, despite being unable to stop the war, regardless this lady has no other choice but to say it. In the first place, since this was a war that was started after making Dantalian into a pretext, it was possible for it to not be strange if Dantalian was the one to lead it. However, even if there were a separate person to have started the war and a separate person to end it, the ones who have to cope with the war in the middle were the soldiers alone.

Within that human girl's command, consideration towards the lives of the soldiers was absent. There is a chance that her actions may be her own way of complaining towards the fact that we had imprisoned Dantalian. There is a chance that it may purely be the childish antics of a young girl and her arrogance. Whichever side it was, she was an individual that made people boundlessly apprehensive if a single army was placed in her hands. Since she was Dantalian's acting general, it was sensible to discuss this with him.

“Sitri, manage the military camp in this lady's stead tonight.”

“Is it fine to go alone, sis?”

Sitri examined this lady with worried eyes. Since she appeared like a pet that was trying to comfort its own companion, a smile drifted onto this lady's lips unintentionally. Being able to show a single smile even in this sort of situation was purely thanks to Sitri.

"It is fine. This lady will simply meet him and have a conversation."

"That's not it. Mm. In the battle just now, Barbatos participated on the other side, right? So I figured she'd be upset as well right now. Even though it's only appropriate for Barbatos to die, you wouldn't really like that, right?"

"....."

"If sis goes to meet Dantalian right now, then won't you end up running into Barbatos? You'll end up needlessly quarreling with her again."

"If that is the case, then more so."

This lady spoke while putting more strength into her voice.

"Then more so, this lady must go this very instant. The declaration this lady made to accept Dantalian into the Mountain Faction was not a lie. This lady had openly declared in front of everybody that she will liaise the man that Barbatos had made into her lover. This lady had no other choice but to utilize a political intrigue last time, but ———."

This time, it will be fair and square.

While looking straight at Barbatos, this lady will definitely bring in the individual that this lady believes is necessary to us.

"....."

After seeing this lady harden her resolve, Sitri nodded her head. This child, who had always silently supported this lady, put a trust, that did not change even to this day, into her voice and pushed this lady

forward.

“Okay. Have a safe trip, sis. I’ll take care of things here.”

Yes. This lady shall trust you and leave it in your hands, Sitri. My gentle acting general.

Leaving behind the captains who were depressed because they had let victory slip through their fingers, this lady left. Each step this lady took, there was mud, so muddy water smeared onto her shoes and seeped into her skirt, dirtying her mantle, but it was fine. If this lady believed that there were several drops of blood from the soldiers, who had died under this lady’s command, mixed into each and every muddy pool on today’s battlefield, then the thought that it was dirty did not even remotely appear in this lady’s mind.

The rain slowly stopped. From the sky, which the dark clouds could not possibly cover entirely, several rays of yellow light from the setting sun fell onto the earth. Among those rays of the setting sun, one of them seeped into the forehead of a corpse that was sprawled out randomly on the ground. Not a demon, but the corpse of a human. The lamb, the soldier that did whatever he could to look upwards in order to see the sunlight, which he most likely could not see even until the moment of his death, was staring at the sky with inflamed eyes.

“.....”

This lady stopped momentarily and bent her back forward. This lady’s mantle touched the earth and became drenched in muddy water. While stroking down the eyelids of the nameless subject, this lady thought that the duty of the lord, where they must douse their cloaks in order for them to do the simple task of closing the eyes of their subject, was quite dreadful.

Regardless of the fact that this lady was unsure how sullied she must become.

Would it not at least be possible to make the resolution to allow

oneself to become that dirty?

This lady sat vacantly on the field where the glow of the setting sun had become pale.

□ The King of Peasants, Rank 71st, Dantalian
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 7
Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance, Simple Prison

Has today's rain finally ceased?

I took out the tobacco that I had stuffed into one of my coat pockets. Because there was no cover, this was a cell where rain kept flowing in. Although I don't plan to either say that I quite enjoy getting hit by the rain or complain about it, the fact that I couldn't smoke properly, that one thing made it boring and inconvenient. This year's spring rain was tenacious and long lasting.

Clack, I sparked a flame with flint. Clack, clack..... While glancing down at the flickering embers that sparked shortly, similar to electricity, I slowly reviewed the battle that must have occurred today. I muttered words that weren't really necessary while doing so.

“Ah, this is difficult to kindle.”

Do not win decisively and do not lose decisively. That was the order I gave Farnese. If this were still a long time ago, then Farnese would have most likely been unable to understand what that meant and she would have questioned it. However, her current state, which was educated by both Lapis and myself, was different. She should have been able to figure out the underlying meaning with ease.

The single part that was troubling me was the Imperial Princess Elizabeth's behavior. I made my response to her move through Farnese. Whether the Imperial Princess will behave according to that or not. If she does so, then what would be different..... In accordance to this, the direction of the war will be decided.

“Badum tat badum tat what shall it be: this or that? Badum tatat tat burn the temples and slaughter the people – shall it be this?.....”

I hummed the military song that I had composed myself.

In short, the ones commanding this war were Elizabeth and myself. By no manner of means could it be Barbatos or Paimon. The purpose of the battle that must have unfolded today, was none other than to inform the two Demon Lords of this cold truth.

Sit still.

If you wish to win the war, then free me from this prison and pass the leadership to me.

If you do not, then you will all one day die to the Imperial Princess.

A frank and explicit message.

Even though you all were out there, you were unable to grasp the war. Despite being confined in this narrow prison here, I dominated the battleground. That is because I am overwhelmingly more competent than you. There was no irrationality, illogicality, or injustice here. It was simply the truth.

It was solely the truth.

“When they die and die again a hundred times…… Ah.”

The embers finally lit the tobacco. I stopped singing for a moment in order to blow some air onto the tobacco. The ember flickered and just barely managed to start burning away the tobacco with a radiant red color.

“Mhm.”

Perfect.

Ten to one, Barbatos must have realized my intention. The chances that Paimon was able to take the hint were around 50 percent. If the

two of them were sensible, then they will realize that nothing good will come from purging me and that victory will become distant if they kill Farnese. The two of them have no other choice but to not make any accusations and simply accept it **unconditionally**.

Because the humans have a monster known as Elizabeth Atanaxia Evatriae von Habsburg.

Because, the only people who can stop her are myself, Dantalian, and Laura De Farnese who Dantalian had taken in.

I will survive due to Elizabeth's competence, and in reverse, I was certain that Elizabeth will be able to breathe thanks to my, and Farnese's, competence. Elizabeth and I were a pair of alpinists who were climbing together while hanging onto the lifeline of the other.

"Now then."

How will Barbatos and Paimon react? Will they rage? They will probably rage. Will they despair? They will probably despair. I am curious as to what will happen next. A person's true value has always been proven after the term 'next' had arrived.

With a mental attitude that was waiting for everything new that was approaching, I looked at the horizon past the iron bars. The tobacco was sweet and made my mind feel numb. I sang the rest of the song while blowing smoke towards the just setting sun.

"Or if we die and die together nonetheless – shall it be that……?"

I was here in this prison.

"Did you see it?"

"I saw it without a doubt."

"Are you sure you saw it correctly?"

"Try telling us what she looks like."

"She had black hair. It was beautiful."

"Her red hair looked as if it were on fire. It was disgusting."

"If that bitch has only one head, then she'll have only one set of hair and I'm certain she'll only have one color of hair as well, and yet, we already have two colors of hair and two sets of hair. In other words, it seems that bitch has two heads. Since we've obtained two demon heads, it'd be great if someone gave me a noble title right about now."

"She was tall! Really tall!"

"From what I could see, she was really short."

"One thing is certain now. The fact that both of your eyes are retarded. If you consider the fact that every truth is difficult to obtain, it is a relief that I was able to at least obtain this huge of a revelation."

"Too much rain was falling. Rain. That bastard rain. This damn rain doesn't have any intention of stopping. Did early spring rain always come down this much? Or is it this place that's weird? It's my first time coming to a backcountry like this, so I have no idea."

"Rain falls when it falls. That can't be helped. It'd be a bit embarrassing if you point towards the falling rain and tell it to stop. It's as pointless as pointing towards the rain that isn't falling and commanding it to descend."

"Your words are as empty as your head. Albeit that's not particularly anything new."

"So? Did you see her or not?"

"What will you do if we did see her, and what will you do if we didn't? If we saw her, then we'd have also described the things which we hadn't seen, and if we didn't see her, then we'd have just described the things which we did see. Whether we saw her or not, that bitch will still be a bad bitch, a crazy bitch, and a completely insane bitch, anyway. This is what we determined, so seeing her and not seeing her is quite the secondary question."

"If it doesn't matter whether I see her or not, then I'd rather not see her if possible. I'd die if I do. I heard that girl's subordinates pick up all the heads of our comrades."

"But I heard she's really fucking pretty."

"I heard her voice is quite smooth, as well."

"I want to live."

"Even if I die, I want to at least die after seeing the flowers bloom. Although I'd probably want to live more, rather than no longer wanting to live, if I do see the flowers bloom. I just think it's a bit

too much that there won't be at least a single flower beside me when I die."

"Ah."

"Really, I don't want to die."

"I hear you."

"I promised my younger sibling that we'd go somewhere together when the cherry blossoms bloomed this year."

"Didn't you say your sibling died?"

"That's why I said it. Wasn't that a good joke?"

"Why do they keep trying to kill us?"

"Why do our generals keep sending us in front of that girl even though they clearly know we'll die?"

"That's because everybody is a bastard."

"Those words are correct. Everyone is a villain."

"We aren't really good-natured people, either."

"They're a bunch of retards and we're a bunch of retards, but why are the retards that die have to solely be us?"

Translator's Notes

1. [\[↑\] Warp and woof.](#)
2. [\[↑\] Battle of annihilation.](#)

Chapter Three

The Day Cherry Blossoms Fall

▯ **The King of Peasants, Rank 71st, Dantalian**
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 7
Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance, Simple Prison

In the middle of the night.

Farnese returned.

“This young lady has brought commemorative gifts, Lord. A lot of them.”

The gift that Farnese brought while saying that, the very first gift that the girl who had just turned 17, an age where it would only be appropriate for a girl to emanate a freshly sprouted feeling, gave to me, the person who was an existence which was closest to that of her father, was not something adorable like pocket money nor was it a traditional hand-written letter, it was simply a mountain of what appeared to be hundreds of human skulls.

Furthermore, they were skulls that had pieces of flesh still attached to them.

“.....”

“This is a knight from Brittany. This here is the ringleader of the most successful free company in the imperial army of Francia. That individual, who this young lady obtained information about after having tortured prisoners, seems to have had quite the reputation. And this here is the brigade commander that is rather well-known in the Republic of Batavia.....”

With a face void of emotions, however, as if she were a child who

had returned from her very first overseas trip and had brought souvenirs for her family members, Farnese displayed the skulls and presented them one at a time. She was able to differentiate them quite well. Although they all looked the same in my eyes and were heads that I wished she would put aside a little, for some reason, it seems in Farnese's eyes it was as if there were colorful nametags attached to each and every head.

"I see. I understand well that you have a sexual orientation that has an incredibly eccentric and academical value in researching. Therefore, can you get rid of all those in an orderly fashion before I end up vomiting? I am much too normal to accept your preferences in their entirety."

"Wait a second, Lord. This young lady has yet to reveal the real present. Be overjoyed. No matter how vast this universe may be, the only girl who would possibly gift Your Lordship with a commemorative gift is this young lady. This young lady is unsure, but would it not be because Your Lordship had done an incredibly good act during your past life?"

Farnese behaved pompously.

It was seriously a bit annoying.

Just who exactly does this child take after in order for her to act like that?

If she behaves like that, regardless of whether she's pretty or not, I'm curious as to whether a man would ever be interested in her. Please do not live while only sticking to my side, you fool. I don't have a hobby of living while a high-performance psychopath is occupying a corner of my home.

"Okay. In any case, that mind of yours, that wishes to not only give me the news of victory but give me a gift as well, is indeed commendable. So, what exactly is the real present?"

"Hu-hum."

Farnese spread out her arms while making a ‘Tadah’ sound effect with her own tongue(I’ll add the fact that the action seriously didn’t suit her).

“Among these, this young lady shall permanently gift to Your Lordship the skull that you especially like. How is that? Is Your Lordship not so moved that you wish to build a library exclusively for this young lady?”

“I do not need it at all!”

I roared and stood up in order to press down on the crown of Farnese’s head. However, I realized that it was impossible. Regretfully, there were iron bars placed between Farnese and myself, moreover, there was also a fair distance between us. My body was obstructed by the cold iron bars with a clank.

“Did you come here while bringing something like that in a bundle as your first gift to your sublime lord? If you only consider the number of lessons I have given you, then the lecture fees alone would have been enough to build a temple. Come here and be hit a little.”

“.....Surely, is Your Lordship not satisfied with these skulls? How troubling. These are excellent-quality goods which this young lady had handpicked sternly. But do not worry. Does Your Lordship think that this young lady did not consider Your Lordship’s fastidious sense of beauty? Knowing this.”

Farnese clapped her hands.

The moment she did so, soldiers approached while pulling along with them wheelbarrows. Surprisingly, the wheelbarrows were filled to the brim with human skulls. Although the rain had stopped, the sky had the same darkness as before so my sense of vision was limited, I could see a line of wheelbarrows, that reached the very bottom of the hill, heading up towards where we were. Farnese gallantly placed her hands on her hips and declared.

“This young lady collected anything that was a corpse on the

battlefield and took only their heads. Now then, Lord. Please appreciate them leisurely until Your Lordship is able to find a head that suits your taste.”

“Like I said, please escape from the idea of gifting a skull to another person, you imbecile!”

This fellow was not right……. Seriously, she was really wrong…….

Farnese tilted her head and muttered, how strange, how could His Lordship dislike this amazing work of art. It appeared as if she was truly surprised.

To Farnese, art meant the moment when life and death flickered brightly. In that regard, the expressions made by the corpses on the battlefield must have been the pinnacle of art to her. Although I did not fail to understand that peculiar logic, I just did not have the amount of leniency needed to passively consent to it.

I let out a sigh.

“Are you jealous?”

“Mm? What does Your Lordship mean?”

“Different to you, the faces that can show expressions freely, I am asking whether you were that jealous of the people who were born normally and ordinarily free.”

Farnese froze.

In the distance, a flame was burning and crumbling. We were going to war while burning the corpses. The floating ashes flew around as if salting the sky, and going against that, black smoke rose upwards. Occasionally, the prisoners, who had yet to die and were latching onto their life strings for as long as they could, were slashed down and killed by our soldiers personally. Crackle crackle……. ah, aaack……. Each time the flames surged upwards, death throes could be heard with a slight delay.

Farnese put those screams behind her and stared vacantly at me. Her emotions were faint. When people say that the temperature of a person's gaze matches that of their heart, then it felt as if Farnese did not even have anything known as temperature.

"I can guess the reason why you are unable to make expressions well. The more you made various facial expressions, the more your father must have gotten worked up. So you, as a type of self-defense, must have decided to get rid of something like expressions completely, similar to how a forest bug throws away its own intrinsic colors and hides within the woods."

"....."

"Farnese, if that is the case, then that is something which you have decided. No matter how cruel or unfair it may be, as it is something that you have gone through personally, in the end, it is something which only you can solve. Even if you were to collect tens of thousands of corpses that possess expressions, the day your rage and scars are relieved will never come."

"This young lady does not understand, Lord."

Farnese spoke calmly.

"Your Lordship, you told this young lady on that day within the snowing pine forest. You told this young lady to kill everything which blocks her path, regardless of whatever it may be, to not be afraid, to not be restrained by the things which are not this young lady's responsibilities, and to cut down everything that tries to restrain her. Your Lordship had told this young lady that if she cuts them down, then in that place is where this young lady's life will be. Why is Your Lordship now advising this young lady to stop taking the heads of the enemies?"

With her finger, Farnese curled her side hair. It was a habit she showed whenever she fell into deep thought.

"Was this young lady's treatment too cruel? War is already

sufficiently cruel. Are this young lady's methods too wicked? There is nothing more foolish than discussing one's duties on a battlefield. Or perhaps, is it because a compassion, which does not befit Your Lordship, has surged.....”

“I told you to kill the things which obstruct you.”

I cut her words.

Although she has become eloquent due to having received education in rhetorics from both myself and Lapis, she still decisively lacked the ability to go against me.

“The thing that is obstructing you is not something like these skulls. Look carefully. Is the thing which impedes your path, not your own **past?**”

“.....”

Farnese became silent.

As if the girl, who had slaughtered at the very least several thousands and at the very most ten thousand today, was being blocked by an invisible wall, she stood in place without being able to move an inch.

“Although this young lady does not want to admit it.”

By the time Farnese was barely able to open her lips, the sky had already become evidently dark and several torches were lit throughout the military encampment.

“Your Lordship is correct. Although this young lady was able to break free from the point where this young lady had deluded herself into believing that the sound of the snow was the cries of cicadas, this young lady is still bound by the chains of the past. And this young lady is unable to control that with her own will.”

Rather than words, Farnese's utterance was closer to that of a small

sigh.

“Whenever there is a face that is showing emotions before this young lady’s eyes, this young lady wishes to lacerate it with a sword. If there is a face that curses at this young lady among them, then this young lady wishes to display that face after having lacerated it. By doing so, this young lady wishes to savor the feeling of life by relishing in the fact that they are dead and this young lady is alive. What should this young lady do? What must this young lady do in order to change this?”

Farnese lowered her gaze to the ground.

This child was most likely pacing back and forth in her mind since she was unsure of what to do. She knew what she had to fix, but she did not know how to fix it.

However, that alone was already a large step.

Until just recently, Farnese was a mass of traumas. She had denied the fact that she was subjected to violence by her own father, she disguised the fact as a lie while not altering her facial expression even once, and she would only speak about her suppressed scars when she was under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In comparison to those days, has Farnese not become much more mature?

Lapis said that Farnese was dangerous. I told Lapis that I would take responsibility and requested of her to leave it to me and wait patiently. While imprisoned in this cage and gazing at Farnese on the other side of the iron bars, I ascertained once more that my judgment at that time was not incorrect.

“I was the same as you.”

Now, it was no longer the time to dig but the time to lead.

“There was a father-like existence within my life as well. Moreover, in terms of filthy personalities, he was perhaps equal or worse than your father, never could he be considered less. My life was ruined

because of that man.”

“.....Your Lordship, as well?”

“That is so.”

I am able to confess since I have personally experienced imprisonment now. The answer of who's the easiest person in the world to put in prison. It was my father. This was not a joke.

For starters, there were no two ways about the fact that my father was a beast that deserved to die. I was certain of this since my mother, who had loved him and loved him more until she finally loved even his innards, had tried to kill him.

Except, regardless of whether he was killed or not, until that day arrived,

there was a lot of things I absolutely had to take

. Even while my father was raising me, there had never been a day where I had starved. Was that alone not something to honestly be grateful for? Although I was raised by a dog-like father and grew up to be a son of a bitch, I was, fortunately, an honest human. I had no other choice but to acknowledge the reality that he had somewhat accomplished his duty as a father because of the mere fact that I had never starved ever since I was born.

That was why, instead of ending his life, I decided to be satisfied with just dropping his life into a bottomless pit. The fellows who are known as mercy and tolerance, as they call it. It turns out that even I was quite the gentle and dutiful son.

The method was simple.

I secretly sent in minors to the swap parties my father would often hold at his favorite villa. That was so. Even though he possessed four or five wives, he still enjoyed promiscuous sexual relations. Was he not deranged? There was no way someone could not show respect towards that exuberant sexual appetite. I believed that it was quite the waste that only I knew about my father's personality, so

accordingly, I had earnestly set up scarecrows known as whistle-blowers and secured evidence.

There wasn't even a need for me to go out of my way to start an incident myself. Even in the places where I had no hand in, my father flirted with a lot of women. Among them, a small sexual harassment scandal occurred in a place that was unrelated to me. Truly consistently, it was another high school girl———there was a reason why I would assert that lolita complex was a mental disease time and time again———while being aghast, I poured the fuel, which I had gathered until then, into the incident that had ignited naturally. Even though I referred to it as fuel, it wasn't anything special. I simply called them over quietly and said a couple of words to them.

—— Young Master, why do we have to secretly install a camera here?

I told them that they didn't need to know.

—— Uh. I-Is this really okay……? Can I also trust that you'll really give me a proper reward once this is over?

I intimidated them to silently believe in me.

—— We've called together all of the defense counsels, Young Master. Do not worry. Even if the video were to be leaked, the situation in which the chairman's family is also harmed will not happen. The fact that a high school student was involved is only a small obstacle, we will do whatever…… Pardon? Are you telling us to

leave it be? But.....?

If they had a complaint, then I told them to complain.

——.....,

——.....,

——.....,

Making them unaware of the things which they had the right to know, making them have no other choice but to believe the thing which they wished to believe, and making them do the things which they must not do. Authority was originally something like that and I had a sufficient amount of authority.

I smiled towards them and spoke. ‘Why aren’t you responding?’. They all gulped and answered me, who was the successor of the company.

—— Yes.

—— Yes, understood......

—— As you wish.

The time to hunt had arrived.

When a lion hunts a deer, they do not become intoxicated by the distant fragrance of blood just because they had already tasted the

blood of a deer's neck once.

Even after my father was imprisoned and I had instantly purged all of his close aids, I remained vigilant. I intercepted information and distorted them. His whistle-blowers were unceasing and for some reason, genuine reporters abruptly started to surge from the rotten press. Aha, if it was like this then it couldn't be helped so I ended up only shrugging.

Stay in prison forever.

That was my final wish and my father more than gladly complied to that small hope of mine.

It became so, consequently.

Four days later, my father died due to a heart attack.

“.....”

I looked up towards the sky that had stopped raining. The vapor refused to dissipate, and instead, chillingly seeped into the earth. Farnese was silently staring at me who was in that state.

“Farnese. I may have succeeded overall, but I committed a mistake at the most vital moment. Although I prevailed in imprisoning that man, I could not possibly expect that he would die due to a chronic disease within four days.”

Aah.

Four days, barely four days.

A time that was much too short to repay him for the resentment that had piled up throughout my entire life.

A mere four days.

I, who had run out immediately after hearing the news of my father's sudden death, was devastated. Even as I was reading the note

that he had supposedly written as a will, only a single thought was going through my head. The thought that this human, this butcher-like bastard, this unequaled venomous snake among venomous snakes, had seen through my entire plan and purposely used a chronic disease as an excuse to **commit suicide**.

I was unsure how my plan was uncovered. He most likely figured it out with his intuition. He was a monstrous man, after all.

Since heart troubles was a chronic disease he had for a long time, no one suspected his death. The opinion of the majority was that he had died because he was prone to death, and it was my own reasonable argument that he deserved to be killed but I was unable to do so. In the end, I may have succeeded in my revenge, but I had to live the rest of my life with this bitter taste in my mouth.

Good for you, father. You must feel lighthearted since you were able to screw your son over one last time in your final moment of life. That's right, good job dying. Did you dislike the idea of atoning for your wrongdoing towards me that much? Did you want to portray to me the fact that you didn't have even a single thing in your life that you had to atone for?

"Haa....."

I let out a sigh.

"There is quite the valuable moral in my story. Do you know what it is?"

"No matter how damned they may be, since your father is still your father, you shouldn't confine them thoughtlessly?"

"You fool. What were you listening to my words with? It is the complete opposite. Do not needlessly forgive the man or leave him alone, and without fail, kill him, the father who had ruined your life, **with your own two hands**."

"....."

I propped up Farnese's chin and stared at her clearly. The very first child who I had decided to take responsibility for after having come to this world. Although I rarely ever expressed this vocally, I consider you to be my adopted daughter. Because the sight of your life being twisted was the same as seeing my own life being twisted.

"The people of the world will most likely give you all sorts of advice. Forgive him. Adjust your way of thinking and change your life to be positive. Oh dear. Those are words that befit those people only. They may, perhaps, not even be correct words, either. In any case, you, have you not suffered things which you cannot possibly say out loud or things that are even more severe than that, by your own father? I can easily guess."

"....."

"Lapis killed her own mother. It should have been the first time since she was born that she was able to properly meet her mother, but she simply chased after her on the spot and slit her mother's throat. In that regard, I consider Lapis to be much wiser than myself. Think about it, Farnese. What will you do if your father dies by the hands of someone else before you are able to do it yourself? I am telling you to imagine that. Is it not dreadful?"

"....."

"Therefore, kill him."

I spoke.

Using a tone that assured the answer.

"Punish your father with your own two hands. Get your revenge and end his life. No matter how vast the world may be, since there is no one else out

there who has as much of a right as you do to get revenge

, you must be the one to do so. The task which I was unable to fulfill because I was sloppy, I sincerely pray that you are able to accomplish it."

As if I were placing a curse on her at the same time as I was bestowing upon her a blessing.

I gave my adopted daughter the answer.

“Once you do so, you will be free.”

Farnese wordlessly shuddered. That was a natural reaction. My words were ice. If one wished to digest ice instantly, then they required a strong stomach and tough teeth. And this girl, who was standing before my eyes, was the pillar that Lapis, the woman who possessed the strongest stomach, and I, who possessed the toughest teeth, had fostered together earnestly. Regardless of whether she grows tired of the cruelty of the acts she must carry out from now on, she will not decline it.

Sure enough.

“.....But, Your Lordship. There is a problem. Even if this young lady tries to kill her father, this young lady’s father resides in the kingdom down south. There are more and more people in the north who Your Lordship and this young lady must take the lives of, so when will we ever be able to advance south?”

Farnese pointed out a problem straight away. That meant that she fundamentally agreed to my words that instructed her to kill her own father. This was why I did not dislike children who my words got through to.

“In order to subjugate the Empire, we have to slaughter that Imperial Princess as well, but according to Your Lordship’s words, the Imperial Princess is the largest mountain. The act of even crossing that mountain is quite the distance away, so until that day arrives, how is this young lady supposed to endure the ravages of her past while in this purgatory? How are we supposed to know whether it would take us 5 years or 10 years? This young lady wishes to quickly become free.”

“It is good that you are honest. Each time I witness you slowly turn

into more of an honest son of a bitch, it makes me feel so overjoyed that I might break out into a dance.”

“Although this young lady is severely worried since it seems as if her personality is decaying day by day due to Your Lordship and Miss Lapis…….”

“That is fine. Do not worry about it. All we have done is merely brought out what was already rotten. Since that is your true essence, do your best to love it.”

“Your Lordship has the talent to touch a chord with another person’s heart each time you open your mouth. A talent that can touch a chord with another person’s heart in an incredibly bad meaning, that is. Please hastily bite your tongue and kill yourself, Lord.”

I raised the corners of my lips.

“Three days.”

“……?”

“You will be able to kill your father within three days.”

Farnese knitted her brow.

“That is bizarre and inordinate. How could this young lady possibly be able to capture her father within three days?”

“You are not going to be the one to bring him, you foolish child. Have I not told you this time and time again? Please, if what is attached to that neck of yours is a head, then please use it. Think about it. Regardless of whether you have fallen into being a slave or not, you are still the descendant of the House of Farnese. A descendant of their family has betrayed mankind and latched onto the demons, but do you think they would sit around when their dignity as a noble family is on the line? Even if they tried to stay still, do you think the people around them would calmly leave them be?”

“.....”

Farnese became silent. You could tell from her face that it was clearly a scenario which she had never considered. I made a tsk-tsk sound with my tongue and shook my head. This was why a child, who learned about the world from history books, had poor senses when it actually came to something important.

“Listen carefully. Listen well and learn well. Quite a long time has passed since the Imperial Princess Elizabeth had first obtained the memoria artifact. At that point, the Imperial Princess would have already gotten into contact with the House of Farnese. Four days have passed since you became the figurehead and gave that speech, but if it is someone who is as competent as the Imperial Princess, then no matter how severe the situation may be, they should be capable of resolving it within a single week. Therefore, three days from now. Regardless of what happens before an entire week has passed, the Imperial Princess will, without a doubt, pressure you by placing the Duke of Farnese at the front of her forces.”

“How can Your Lordship be certain of that.....”

“Dear Lord. To bring around someone like you as my descendant, I am the one who is misfortunate. Not only are you unable to think, but are you unable to listen as well? Kid, are the rumors that you are the descendant of the House of Farnese and the daughter of a whore not already widespread throughout the front lines of the Army of the Crusaders? Hm? Who do you think could have grasped your personal information so precisely and have also circulated malicious rumors about you, all within three days? Can it be anyone else than the Imperial Princess Elizabeth?”

“.....”

“Therefore, do not worry about whether you will have to wait 10 years or not, but instead, be concerned about the immediately approaching three days. My foolish general, even a week is a time that is beyond your capacity. Fumbling through a single day and

discovering the next day again, that is the level which you are still currently at. How impudent of you to try and discuss 10 years.”

“This young lady is starting to dislike Your Lordship more…….”

“That is because a sky is above your sky. I know that feeling well.”

“This young lady also dislikes Your Lordship who pretends to know that feeling well, as well…….”

“Oh? Then try winning against me. For someone who is unable to win, you must have quite the happy life since you still have some pride left. Is that brain of yours feeling peaceful?”

“Guuuuh…….”

Farnese groaned without showing any emotions on her face. What a cute fellow.

Essentially, the desire for power was something that did not forgive anyone who was above themselves. I was the one who had awoken Farnese’s lust for power, and I was also the one who was actually occupying her sky. Due to that, in Farnese’s position, she had no other choice but to feel stifled.

“In any case, since things will be proceeding like that, keep that in mind. So even if the Imperial Princess suddenly brings your father in order to shake your mentality, do not be too alarmed. If anything, be delighted that 10 years was shortened to three days. Get your revenge and take his life. And…….”

And.

It was at the moment I was about to add a few more words.

“———Those are good words, Dantalian. Get your revenge and take his life.”

I heard a familiar voice.

The two of us turned our heads at the same time. From a corner of darkness that was blanketed by the night sky, lively, and yet, light steps were approaching from that direction. The owner of both the voice and the sound of footsteps came all the way to a place which was illuminated by a torch that was near the prison and stopped.

Pure white hair.

Yellow pupils that were like that of a lion.

“As it so happens, I came here because I wanted to say those exact same words to you.”

Barbatos was smiling there.

Tick.

The pocket watch that was submerged in my clothes moved.

▯ The King of Peasants, Rank 71st, Dantalian
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 7
Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance, Simple Prison

“Hi, Dantalian. Mr. Self-Addressed Genius.”

The night was thin. The rain that had stopped falling during the evening still remained drifting somewhere throughout the air. Although the torchlight made the shadows flicker like steam, making the outlines appear faint, rather than standing on the ground, it appeared as if half of Barbatos’ feet were engulfed by a pitch black mire.

“Iyaah. It seems that life in prison must suit your body well. Look at the complexion on your face. That mug of yours, that has always been weighed down by exhaustion, has bloomed, it really has. You adorable kid. It wasn’t a waste of time to send you to prison.”

Even though it was vague and ambiguous, the occasion of Barbatos’ distinct presence fading away did not occur. Her voice, it was because her voice was clouded with laughter. Although it was easy for Barbatos to laugh, each laugh was viscous with the thickness which was built up from within her innermost heart. Every time she laughed, it felt as if I could see a well that had no visible bottom.

“.....”

I knew she would come.

My mind was even ready for it.

However, there was one thing. If there was one thing that I did not predict, then it was the fact that Barbatos did not come here alone. Barbatos had arrived while dragging someone by the hair. My heart instantly became cold. I wonder if she had sensed the temperature of

my gaze. Barbatos chuckled.

“Ah. Her? I was on my way here when I suddenly had an idea. When you and this girl were philandering a long time back, I gave you some relationship counseling, right? Nevertheless, I felt like you two weren't spending enough time together recently.”

Lapis.

Lapis Lazuli. My love.

My lover, whose pink hair was beautiful and blue eyes were pretty, was feebly sprawled out there while in the nude and sullied by whip and burn marks all over her body. Barbatos tapped Lapis' head.

“That's why I used this opportunity to get a bit more acquainted.”

“.....”

“Wow. Bastard, look at that face. You look like you might accidentally end up killing me, you know? Hm? Right, you already played around with me on the battlefield so why wouldn't you be able to do something like take my life?”

Barbatos.

You truly are.

“What?”

She grinned widely.

“Is it your first time seeing a bitch?”

I shut my mouth.

The opposition had a hostage. A hostage was a tool that could be dealt with in whatever way that the opposition deemed fit. Therefore, it was a method to flaunt their power before me. In other words, as it was a bomb that could explode at any moment, it must be dealt with

quickly and I must not rashly irritate the individual who was trying to flaunt their strength. Since I continued to not show any response, Barbatos made a long ‘hmm’ sound with her nose.

“Good. I like that you’re well-behaved. It seems you’ve realized your place. Well, since both you and I are in a relationship where we’ve seen everything that can be seen, I won’t make this long. Apologize.”

“Apologize?”

“Yeah. Apologize for changing the orator as you please, apologize for requesting a military trial as you please, and above all else, apologize for treating the lives of my soldiers like toys, as if the battlefield were a playground, Dantalian.

Barbatos uttered an ‘ah’ and added in something else.

“Oh right. I won’t permit you to give an excuse. Something like, ‘that wasn’t my intention’, or some rubbish like that. Whenever I hear rubbish, I feel as if the opposition is rubbish as well, but on the other hand, I also get the feeling that they’re treating me like trash. It could be my feelings that are messed up, but well, it’s not right. Something doesn’t sit well with me when that happens. If a person is a person, then they should show mutual respect. Both sides shouldn’t become sons of bitches, right?”

Barbatos hurled Lapis forward. Has she passed out? Lapis did not utter even a single moan and simply fell onto the floor.

“The way to apologize is simple. First, take the head of that human girl over there with your own hands. Next, slit the throat of this outcast here with your own hands. Finally, I’ll have to take one of your arms. How’s that? Simple, right? Apologies need to possess significance, sincerity, and cordiality, after all. Although someone impudent like you may not understand this that well, apologies were originally something like this. It’s difficult, right? Since it’s so difficult, that’s why you shouldn’t commit a mistake in the first place.”

“.....”

“Four thousand people died.”

Barbatos stepped on Lapis’ head with her right foot. Barbatos was the one who boasted a great strength among Demon Lords. If at this very instant, she were to put even the slightest bit more strength into her foot, then Lapis’ head will most likely be crushed.

“It’s four thousand people, you know? Four thousand of just my soldiers alone were killed because of your and that bitch’s so-called fun and games. Does this not seem strange in your eyes?”

“Barbatos, everyone dies in war.”

“Yeah, but they don’t die like a joke. That’s the important part. The fact that a meaning is required in death. With that thought alone, people like us are able to go to war.”

Barbatos pulled a dagger out from her clothes. She then grabbed and lifted Lapis’ head again and placed the blade against Lapis’ cheek. It was at that moment that Lapis slowly opened her eyes.

Our eyes met.

“.....”

“.....”

Although we did not utter even a single word.

Both Lapis and I finished our conversation in an instant.

Regardless of whether she knew so or not, Barbatos continued her sanguineous-humorous attitude. Although only very slightly, the edge of the blade pierced Lapis’ skin. The scarlet blood that formed was distinct in my eyes.

“I didn’t particularly trust you since the very beginning, Dantalian. Trust has always been lacking in our relationship.”

“That is disappointing to hear. I was rather confident that we were able to pile up a rather nice relationship. Although I do not wish to make patronage with something that has already ended, I saved you and your forces once before, right?”

“The language of Habsburg.”

Barbatos smiled.

“I actually know how to speak some human languages, you retard.”

“.....”

“There’s something pricking your conscience, right?”

I immediately recalled a sharp laughter in my head.

— Oi, would you look at that? Dantalian, what are they babbling about?

Before the war had yet to begin. During the time where both Barbatos and I were in the prime of burning the mountain range, each time we punished the fire-fallow villagers, Barbatos left the translation to me. That was because the proud Demon Lords did not believe it was necessary to acquaint themselves to the human languages. However, was that not the case? Did she know? Despite the fact that she already knew, she pretended not to and simply watched over how I interpreted their words. She had tested me in order to see whether I was trustworthy, to see how far she could trust me. Was that the case.....?

At that time, I did not interpret the words exactly as how the fire-fallow villagers had spoken them. I treated the peasants with sympathy at all times. However, in Barbatos’ eyes, it must have

appeared as if I were distorting information. A fellow who cannot be trusted completely. I could not argue if I were regarded as so……. However, I had something to protest as well.

“That’s right. There’s something that’s pricking my conscience. So what? You wanted a war to break out. So accordingly, I gifted you a war. You wanted to obtain victory. So accordingly, I gifted you a victory. I have presented you with everything that you desired until now. Despite that, are you distrusting me just because of some trivial translation mistakes? There’s a limit to having a narrow mind.”

“Hah, stop talking nonsense, Mr. Dantalian. Be it war or victory, that’s something we both wanted. Why are you trying to act all kind by saying you gifted something or whatever? Do you want to see a pretty blade mark left on this bitch’s neck?”

Barbatos placed the dagger closer to Lapis’ throat while talking sarcastically. Lapis gazed at me while being completely unfazed by that.

Ah, Barbatos. You’ve made a crucial mistake. Lapis was not my weakness. She was a great woman who absolutely would not forgive herself if she were degraded to something like my weakness. Lapis and I made each other stronger. I was able to remain alive and well because of her unchanging gaze.

“Your words are correct, Barbatos. You and I both yearn for war and crave for victory. Because that is the case, you must not kill my vassals.”

“Aang?”

“Are you feigning ignorance? Or do you truly not know? Since you have experienced today’s battle, you should be aware of it by now.”

I spoke calmly. I put the truth that Barbatos never wished to hear on my lips. I more than gladly vocalized the reality that the Queen of Silver absolutely did not wish to face.

“My general and the Imperial Princess of the Empire are more competent than you.”

Click.

Barbatos’ body froze for an instant.

I could sense that her breath had frozen over. A silence fell around us completely. The moisture that had formed on an iron bar of my prison gathered into a droplet of water and slid down. Barbatos was quiet, so Laura, Lapis, and I simply endured the cold wind silently. Since there was no response for a long amount of time, I was the first person to open his mouth.

“You have already once been cornered to the point where you nearly faced defeat at the hands of the Imperial Princess. Although you claimed that it was because of His Excellency Marbas’ crushing defeat, if you were more competent than the Imperial Princess, then you would not have been forced into such a defensive position. Myself and my general. If Farnese here did not come to save you, then by this point, the Crescent Alliance would have had even our last remaining plain area stolen from us by the humans.”

“.....”

“Furthermore, you were unable to predict the Imperial Princess’ surprise attack even today. If you knew how to speak the language of Habsburg, then that makes it even more of a costly blunder. Why was it that the imperial army of Habsburg could not be seen even though the armies of every other nation were gathered together, you should have been able to notice the threat that was approaching through the heavy rain. Although you had the opportunity to do so, you were unable to realize it.”

I apologize, Barbatos.

But you Demon Lords required some shock therapy. If time continues to flow by just like this, then you will never be able to predict the truth that all of demonkind will be annihilated by the

humans. You were all overconfident in your own competence. My role was to shatter that arrogance of yours. Therefore, I told her this.

“That’s right, you said four thousand soldiers died? That is unfortunate. I give you my condolences. However, that is not Farnese’s mistake, that is not my mistake, and that especially is not the Imperial Princess’ mistake. All we have done is do our utmost in our respective positions, after all. Barbatos, the fact that you lost four thousand soldiers today…….”

“…….”

“Is simply because you are less competent than us.”

Although it is incredibly regretful.

Barbatos, it turns out that even you, the individual who shines as brightly as the snowy fields do during a dark lunar night, are less competent than someone else. You may be able to perform a supporting role on the stage, but you cannot play the leading role. That is your limit.

Even you should have vaguely felt it yourself. The fact that your military personnel faced death because you were unable to notice the movement of the enemy troops. The fact that the life of your men solely hung on your own shoulders and that you are unable to shift the responsibility to someone else. You have become this enraged because you detested and regretted yourself.

Aah, Barbatos. Demon Lord whose laughter is merciless. The sacred and inviolable Demon Lord who calls herself the absolute majesty, the master among the counsel of 72 who leads all of demonkind. You were unable to manage **this era** by yourself. You were slated to go through quite the cruel seasons for the next 10 years. Moreover, the individuals who were destined to become the leading actors were already decided. Elizabeth von Habsburg, Laura De Farnese, and the hero that will one day arrive……. They will write an epic poem about the continent gathering together into a single empire, and you will become a song, that has already ceased and met its end, and

disappear instantly.

However.

“Let me live.”

I was here.

“I will give you war. I will gift you victory. I will present to you a future without defeat. I will show our demonkind warm fields. I do not care if you all take exclusive possession of the glory and honor, Barbatos. You all can take every last bit of something like pride and fame. I wish for simply one thing.”

Simply.

Therefore.

“Spare me and my vassals.”

There was a silence.

Barbatos opened her mouth. With lips that no longer had even a shred of humor lingering on them.

“Those words.”

“.....”

“Can you take responsibility for them?”

I nodded my head.

Let us work together, even you have a chance, if we all grab each others' hands then we can overcome anything———I refused sweet words like these. On the other side of this plain, there was an Imperial Princess who was going to propine the worst nightmare in history. If I was going to stand against her, then I had no other choice but to become a nightmare as well.

And I did not find becoming a nightmare to be disgusting or see it as an arduous task, it was merely a joyous occasion for me. How fortunate was it that I was going to be the one to play that role?! You ought to be overjoyed, Barbatos. Although it seems you were regretful since 4,000 soldiers had died, I can continue to laugh like this even if I were to slaughter 4 million people. Welcome the fact that I am an honest son of a bitch. I shall lead you. I shall take the responsibility.

“Four hundred years.”

I spoke.

“For no less than four hundred years, the expeditions of the Crescent Alliance have continued to fail each and every time. The reason behind that was not because you were weak. On the contrary, it is the complete opposite. You all were a bit too strong.”

“.....What are you talking about?”

“Look. Even if we are the Crescent Alliance, at most, only half of the Demon Lords that live in the demon continent are participating. Rank 1 to Rank 4 do not even take part in the expeditions. The only individuals among the highest ranking Demon Lords to engage in warfare are you, Paimon, and His Excellency Marbas. Despite that, we surprisingly have a massive army of a hundred thousand.”

Even if a nation were to scratch together whatever military personnel they could, it would be difficult for them to exceed a military power of 40,000. The Crusaders, a force that was created after every nation had united and squeezed out whatever military strength they could, had no more than a hundred thousand soldiers. Of course, that most likely was not their maximum strength. However, if you consider the fact that demons are stronger than humans on average, then in terms of military power, the gap between the Crescent Alliance and the Crusaders grew much further apart.

“I shall say this honestly. In all of the demon continent, the Demon Lords who sincerely wish for victory are all here participating in this war. To the other Demon Lords, the land that belongs to the humans

is nothing more than a nest of bugs that they could easily crush if they put their minds to it.”

“.....”

“If anything, the thing they fear are you guys.”

“.....Demon Lords are afraid of other Demon Lords?”

That is right.

I have never thought that it was bothersome.

Becoming a king was the pinnacle of authority that had the role of guiding the people. However, there were a whopping 72 people who were standing at that zenith in the demon continent. I didn't denounce the demon continent for being similar to that of a tribe nation for no reason.

The only reason why this idiotic society still held was because of the common enemy, in other words, it was because humanity was holding out. What would happen if humanity disappeared? Just as how Barbatos wished, what would happen after we are truly able to subjugate the entirety of the human continent?

“It is simple, Barbatos. After crushing all of humanity, the Demon Lords will, without a doubt, start a civil war in order to distinguish who has the most authority among themselves.”

Barbatos furrowed her brow. Indeed, she was a woman who had devoted her life to conquering the continent. She had not considered the feelings and positions of the other garbage Demon Lords who had no interest in something like justification and merely turned their attention to their own security.

“When that day comes, which Demon Lord do you think will have the advantage? Rank 1 Baal? Rank 2 Agares? Rank 3 or maybe Rank 4? No. That is absolutely not the case. No matter how powerful the individual may be, they cannot withstand the assault of a group. The

group they fear the most.”

I chuckled.

“Are you.”

“.....”

“Barbatos. Paimon. Corps commanders such as yourselves who utilizes other Demon Lords as your own military power. Demon Lords of Demon Lords. During the inevitable anarchy that will occur after the extermination of the human race, they have no other choice but to fear people like you, who move together as a group, the most.”

Indeed, this was a self-evident truth.

Because they know that it would be their turn next once the humans have fallen into ruin.

I was certain that the Demon Lords, who were not participating in this Crescent Alliance expedition, were desperately scheming to make the war **fail**.

The fact that the Crescent Alliance experienced failure after failure for the past 400 years was not a mere coincidence. At most, Paimon only tried to stop me, she has never attempted to mess up the Crescent Alliance itself. People, who were much more wicked and slyer than Paimon, were lurking in the rear of the demon continent.

“Traitors. We are overflowing with traitors. You accused me of having committed racial treason. However, something of my degree is actually humble. It is at a boundlessly moderate level. Although I screwed you over for only just 20 minutes during the duration of the speech, those Demon Lords screwed over their own kind for the past 400 years.”

“.....”

“Do you now understand why you must keep me alive?”

Our enemies are all around us.

In the front, the unique hero known as the Imperial Princess Elizabeth.

In the rear, the powerful Demon Lords starting from Rank 1 to Rank 4.

They pressure, threaten, and intimidate us from both fronts until we finally end up facing mutual destruction.

I stuck my right arm out through the iron bars.

“We do not have the time to fight among one another. Take my hand. Let us take the heads of the traitors, and if we have some spare time, then let us sink the Imperial Princess’ ship as well. Once we have done all that, we shall establish a society which we govern.”

Despite being locked behind these bars, the people who must come to me have all come. From the very beginning, the people who had to be sent were constantly on that side. Because there was no need for me to go to and fro, I was free.

I was here in this prison.

□ The King of Peasants, Rank 71st, Dantalian
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 8
Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance, Simple Prison

.....Give me some time to think.

Barbatos left behind those words before departing. The only people who were left here now were Lapis and Farnese. Once Lapis was free from the position of hostage, she let out a light sigh as if she did not feel even slightly affected by the torture she had received.

“It seems this innocent one is the one to receive the wrath because of Your Highness. It has been a long time since this one had last tasted torture. Although this one had nearly forgotten the fact that she belonged to the absolute lowest social status thanks to Your Highness, this one has realized her position once more due to Your Highness’ doing as well.”

“.....I am sorry. I took the matters much too easily. I did not think that she would involve even you.”

“It is fine. This one is used to it.”

I gave the words of apology, which Barbatos requested so much for but never received in the end, with much ease to Lapis. Lapis received a mantle from Farnese and loosely covered her naked body.

“However, Your Highness has done very well.”

“Is that so?”

“Yes. Even though this one was kidnapped, Your Highness’ unwavering posture was very advisable. To be honest, this one had

worried that Your Highness may possibly fall into a panic, but it seems this one has no reason to be concerned from now on. Even if this one were to receive harm, this one is now certain of the fact that Your Highness will continue to advance forward. Please continue to do so. This one will do so as well.”

Lapis then headed past the torches and towards our military camp. If she walks around in that state, then there is a chance that she could be assaulted by common soldiers who have been blinded by their sexual desires, but it seems she was not afraid. Farnese, who had her mouth shut the entire time, muttered.

“As expected, Your Lordship is not sane. Does a woman like that truly hit the mark of Your Lordship’s preferences? She is a woman who will live coldly, love coldly, and die coldly.”

“Kid.”

My acting general, who was in charge of my front, had badmouthed my lover, who was in charge of my rear. In a situation like this, a normal person would display an ambiguous attitude and try to gain a favorable impression from both sides.

“Mm? What is it, Lord?”

“You will never be able to compare yourself to Lapis with what little ability you have.”

And I was not a normal bastard.

I declared solemnly.

“How dare you not know your place and badmouth Lapis? Lapis is the first woman I have ever loved and will be the last woman I will ever love. If Lala were to say it, then I would even believe a prophecy about the world ending. However, if you said something like that, then I would probably just give you a spanking.”

I gave her a smooth smile.

“How is that? Has the hierarchy been clearly established in that sewer-like brain of yours?”

“.....”

Farnese opened her lips.

“.....They say that one must not get involved even if a crazy dog were to bark, but what is this young lady supposed to do when there are two insane dogs growling above her? Since both the male and female dog have gone deranged together, it seems as if this young lady is the only normal person in the world.”

What is this fool saying?

Your bullshit is bitter, my daughter.

“In any case, the prediction that this young lady’s father will appear on the battlefield soon. This young lady shall go back and ready her heart. If possible, please do not come out of prison forever, Your Lordship.....”

Farnese trudged away feebly. She was heading towards the same direction that Lapis had gone in. The two must be spending time together in the military tent that was peaceful since I was absent.

For some reason, as I imagined the scene of Lapis being the abuser and Farnese being the abused, my mind felt cozy. Those broken things that were in that single spot were my family, but it felt as if my mind went into each of their broken places and mended them to be flawless. I laid down on the bundle of hay and comfortably closed my eyes.



That day.

I had a dream.

Once I looked down, I saw that I was wearing shoes. I knew that I was in a dream by just that alone. It was somewhat intriguing. In the past, I attempted to have lucid dreams several times due to curiosity, but I have never been in a dream where my self-awareness was as sharp as this.

“.....”

All I could see when I looked around my surroundings was an endlessly vast white world. Only a ground, that was like a drawing paper which had yet to be colored, was stretched out all the way to the horizon. And in the center of that, as if it were something obvious, Demon Lord Paimon was standing there.

“.....As expected.”

I muttered unintentionally.

Paimon was a mare^[1]. Among mares, Paimon was the very person who was referred to as the Queen of Mares. Although my love, Lapis, had thinly inherited the blood of a succubus, I heard that the ability to control people's dreams was granted to only a small minority of mares. Someone like Paimon could easily intrude in another person's dream.

Once our eyes met, Paimon gave me a modest greeting. For a person who had just invaded another person's personal space without having received the owner's permission, her behavior was much too courteous, making it feel as if this woman was a guest who had formally received an invitation. That was quite the Paimon-like conduct.

“Welcome, Dantalian. To this lady's world.”

I had a bitter smile on my face.

“Excuse me, but if my memory serves me right, then I have never sent an invitation nor have I received one…….”

Paimon showed a guilty face.

“……This lady apologizes. However, this lady believed that this was the best method to dispel the misunderstanding you have of this lady. This lady believes that with just a little bit more, even you will be able to understand her words, Dantalian.”

“Oh, truly Your Highness does not change. Since Your Highness is freely deciding what I will trust and distrust, I can only admire you.”

“Please forgive this lady’s discourtesy one more time.”

Paimon appeared to still have apologetic eyes. I wonder how many people were deceived and done in because of those innocent eyes. I shrugged my shoulders and went into the main topic.

“Very well. This is my first time dreaming a dream together with another person. Despite how I may appear, I welcome new experiences. So, what is possible here? Is anything possible since this is a dream?”

“Unfortunately, materializing every possible thing is impossible.”

Paimon shook her head slightly.

“Solely the things which this lady has seen and experienced throughout her life can be reproduced here. Like this…….”

Paimon waved her fan. Once she did so, tree roots started to wriggle underneath the ground before instantly surging upwards, penetrating the ground as it rose. It seems the tree was not only a single type of tree. Certain branches had white bark like that of a birch tree, and some other branches were encased in a brown layer of bark similar to the ones seen on pine trees. The tree grew bigger and bigger until it got to the point where it nearly blocked out the entire sky. Since the floral leaves were cherry blossoms, each tree branch

shined a bright white color. The world was pink.

Paimon slowly stroked the bark of the tree.

“Like this, although this lady can make new creations by mixing together one feature with another, it is impossible to create something entirely from scratch.”

“Hoh.”

This was honestly admirable. Envable, even. If I had the ability to fiddle with dreams, then I would be so elated by the fact that I could sing, boil, and burn my father every single night, that I most likely would never want to wake up.

“I see there was a reason why mares are known as the clan of the night. My concubine is a half-blood so she is unable to control dreams. It is a bit unfortunate.”

“.....It may be more of a blessing. The fact that she is not a pure blood, that is.”

Paimon smiled sorrowfully.

“As you can see, mares are capable of creating an incredible amount of things within a dream. The lovers of mares are charmed by that. The most beautiful woman in the world, the most captivating scenery in the world, a feast of sweet and fantastical food. Everyone who pairs up with a mare starts to become more enchanted by the dreams that mares can show instead of the time they spend together with their lover.”

Paimon lowered her fan. In that same moment, the tree that was as grandiose as a world tree soon started to fall apart. Poof, as if a bunch of popcorn had popped all at the same time, the cherry blossom petals all fell while in full bloom. In the center of the descending petals, Paimon gazed upwards.

“In the end, people turn their backs on reality. An absolutely perfect

dream and a pitiable reality..... It is clear what they would choose. They ignore their wives and steadily throw away their sons and daughters. Compared to their wives and children in real life, they have a more beautiful family in their dreams anyway. That is why the majority of mares do not share love.”

Since they will be betrayed, anyway.

Paimon muttered as she placed a handful of wind onto the petals that were flowing by.

Although I could see a single aspect of the girl who was standing before me here, I did not probe into it. I was not the person who had to take the responsibility. There was nothing more terrifying than embracing a past which you cannot possibly shoulder. I picked up a branch that had broken off from the cherry tree and spoke.

“That is an interesting ethnic tale. If there is time, I wish to leisurely listen to the love stories which Your Highness Paimon has experienced. However, is this the reason why Your Highness invited me here? In order to exchange love stories?”

“.....This lady.”

Paimon turned her gaze and looked at me.

“Has thought of this since a long time ago. A woman who is closest to being perfect exists. The most beautiful scenery and banquet exist. If that is the case, then perhaps———would it not be possible to dream of **the most perfect and beautiful society?**”

“.....?”

The most perfect society? What is this woman trying to say?

I couldn't comprehend her. Of course, everyone lived while burying their respective ideas of what an ideal society was within their hearts. As I was not unaware of that, I was suspicious of the ulterior motive that was going out of its way to try and take out what was buried in

my mind. Paimon, we are not close enough to leisurely share the scenery within our minds, is that not so?

Should I try sending a light jab?

“A perfect society, is it? Would something like that really be possible?”

“Yes, of course not. This lady is aware of the impossibleness.”

Paimon laughed nearly inaudibly.

“It is most likely absurd. It was futile in the past, and it is still impossible even to this very day. However, Dantalian, this lady is the Queen of Mares. A race that sows the dreams of the night into people. Even if this lady, who held that position, had allowed herself to have such a pious dream, this lady believes that it was not something which went excessively beyond her means. Sir Dantalian, in order for this lady to continue her life, similar to other people, this lady required a type of bliss.”

Paimon glanced down at the flower petal that had landed on her palm and lamented.

“Ah, it was a regretful dream. Yes, once this lady looked back at it after everything was over, it was an intoxication. However, what could this lady have lived with if that did not exist?”

“.....”

“At first, it was 400 years ago. This lady believed that for demonkind as a whole, a society where Demon Lords were the rulers, was a society that was closest to perfection.”

Paimon waved her fan.

The scenery changed. I found myself standing in the very center of a battlefield which I had never been to before. Soldiers flickered like shadows, approximately a hundred thousand demons passed through

our surroundings. Since they were phantoms that lacked physical bodies, they phased through both Paimon and myself like ghosts.

At the way front, there were three people who were leading this massive army. There was no one else whose figures were as distinct as theirs. They were familiar to my eyes as well. They were none other than the corps commander Demon Lords; Barbatos, Paimon, and Marbas.

— Oh, my army! You are all praiseworthy! You all have truly obtained a great achievement!

Barbatos shouted while her white cape fluttered in the wind. Different to her current self, she was wearing a silver helmet and a matching silver set of armor. Barbatos shined a radiant silver color due to the descending rays of the sun.

Paimon mentioned 400 years ago just now. If that was the case, then that means this was Barbatos from 400 years ago. The days where Barbatos had yet to turn into a necromancer and was waving around a sword as a warrior……. After examining her carefully, she was smiling in a way that gave off a completely different feeling compared to what she showed now. It wasn't a sloppy smile that was caused by being perennial. It was a smile that resembled a mid-summer sun, a smile that confidently threw herself out to the world.

— However, there are still many things we must do! We are the demons of conquest. Our glory is not placed in yesterday's victory, but instead, it is solely placed in the future where our great conquest is over.

— Cowards say that we have fought enough, that it is now the time to rest. However, what do we warriors say in response? Us,

warriors who have surpassed both race and status, and have solely become one due to camaraderie. How will you respond?

— It is not enough!

Barbatos raised both of her arms and extended her nails like a cat. As if she were trying to claw and scar the entire world with her small hands until she was able to devour it all.

— It is not enough! We still lack too much!

— More battles and more blood! In order to make every battlefield, which we have fought on, into the land that our descendants will live in! Until each drop of blood, which we have shed, has turned into fertilizer for the land that our descendants will cultivate!

—Aah, gentlemen! My proud warriors! We love our posterity infinitely. For that reason, we not only have no other choice but to fight eternally, but we are able to fight thanks to it!

A hundred thousand soldiers all cheered at the same time.

Demons, dwarves, and centaurs started to blow their horns as they pleased. The sound of drums resonated without any tune or tempo. Although the soldiers were in a chaotic state, on the contrary, it felt as if they were a coherent whole.

This was the magnificent form of the very first Crescent Alliance. The cries coming from the army echoed throughout the distant continent and tinged all the people of the continent with fear. These elite troops were led by the corps commanders, Barbatos of Immortality, Paimon of Benevolence, and Marbas of Nobility, all

standing side by side.

— For eternal death! For eternal glory!

Barbatos turned her back and personally went forward to the front line. Her white cloak fluttered blindingly. Being driven by that movement that was like a hand gesture, the hundred thousand soldiers became a tidal wave and followed her.

“It was a glorious battle.”

Paimon muttered while gazing at the tidal wave of shadows that was pushing out into the distance.

“We had seized victory perfectly. With an army of 120,000, we defeated the Crusaders of approximately 260,000 at the time, repeatedly. We ruined a single kingdom within half a month, and two months after that, we completely destroyed another kingdom. The three of us were certain. The fact that we were invincible. That we would truly be able to build a nation for all of demonkind on this ground since we could never be defeated. Yes. We had unwavering faith.”

I see.

If it's the war that had destroyed 2 kingdoms, then it wasn't the first expedition but the second. Since I had read the history book, I knew how this was going to end. The second Crescent Alliance was recorded as the most horrendous failure in all of history.

Paimon closed her eyes.

“Until our kind betrayed us.”

“.....”

“After we conquered the second kingdom, we immediately advanced deeply into the center of the continent. It was immediately after we had demolished the Crusader’s main force. Split the continent into two pieces before the enemy troops can reform. That was the larger flow of our plan. Perhaps, no, without a doubt, our judgment was not wrong.”

However, the Demon Lords who were in charge of the supply line in the rear had betrayed them.

Principally, supply lines were managed by low ranking Demon Lords. Demon Lords with low ranks had just as little military power as well. It was appropriate to concentrate them on the supplies instead of sending them out to the front. High ranking Demon Lords stood at the front lines, and low ranking Demon Lords supported them from behind……. An incredibly rational arrangement.

Nevertheless, they committed betrayal.

———The scenery changed once more.

The brilliant army of silver, which I saw just a moment ago, had disappeared without a trace. Each soldier was ragged.

An army that was unable to eat properly because the supply lines had been cut. Even if they tried to obtain provisions through pillaging, the Crusaders were employing a scorched earth policy. Since even a proper way of pillaging was being prevented, as time passed, the massive army started to tire itself out as it continued to drag around its large size.

From every direction, detached forces from the Crusaders emerged and bit away at the Crescent Alliance. They were tenacious and rough like a pack of hyenas hunting down a lion. Even if they wanted to resist, it would only cause more time to be delayed. Barbatos bit her lips and gave an order.

——.....abandon.

——Abandon our forces and retreat.

Tears of blood were flowing down Barbatos' face as she muttered that command. Putting the scenery of the subjects, who she had led all the way here from the demon continent, being terrorized and slaughtered behind her, Barbatos fled. It was not solely her, but Paimon and Marbas as well.

“.....”

That was Barbatos' past.

The incident that had stolen the warmth from Barbatos' heart.

“Sir Dantalian, can you guess how many out of 120,000 soldiers returned alive?This lady remembers it vividly even to this day. Even though 400 years have passed, this lady can still clearly see the scene where the three of us received the report from our adjutants together.”

Paimon gently opened her eyes.

“Twenty-six thousand and eighty-four.”

Out of the massive army of 120,000 soldiers.

“Only..... Barely twenty-six thousand and eighty-four people were able to come back alive and step on the soil of their homelands.”

Within the scenery of the dream.

Barbatos was silently shedding tears. She was absently staring out into an empty space as if she were a doll that had its strings cut. With a battered and worn out cloak, which was also filled with holes, wrapped around her body, she endlessly wept in silence.

Paimon placed her hand on top of that Barbatos' shoulder. However, Barbatos was merely a phantom within a dream. Paimon was unable to stroke the shoulder of the girl who was once her comrade and simply drifted her hand over an empty space. Paimon stopped her hand and spoke to herself.

“Why did this happen……?”



The scene was swept away by a gust of cherry blossom petals.

Barbatos' dim shadow, her distinct tears, and the plain that was vastly covered with the corpses of soldiers sprawled out, all disappeared and the world returned to being a white landscape.

“……This lady was unable to tell her that it was okay. This lady was unable to console her by telling her that everything would turn out better from now on. There is a chance that this lady may have already felt it by then. That we will no longer…… that the day where we are able to fight together will never arrive.”

Paimon gazed at my face.

“Last night, this lady overheard the argument you had with Barbatos. Dantalian, you most likely know the reason. The reason behind why the Crescent Alliance had failed time and time again.”

I nodded my head.

Towards the opposition who had, without reserve, spoken her mind up to this point, regardless of whether she was my political rival or not, I had no desire to give a cynical remark. Moreover, the person whom Paimon had shown to me the most was Barbatos. If she had

brazenly belittled her, then I would have responded accordingly. There was no benefit I could possibly gain from badmouthing my political partner behind her back.

“Even if they are all Demon Lords, each of their power varies infinitely depending on their individual ranks. If the continent is united, then the Demon Lords, who were commanding, will naturally form a large group. In that moment, a war not between humans and demons, but a war between demons and demons will break out. And with an incredibly high probability, you [\[2\]](#) will be the ones to win.”

“That is precise.”

Paimon laughed sheepishly.

“This lady realized that truth one step too late. Until that moment, this lady believed that our supply lines had just been pillaged by the humans. Surely our fellow Demon Lords would not have betrayed us…… at that time, during those days, this lady could not imagine that possibility.”

Although after knowing that truth, Barbatos claimed a few good people and established the Plains Faction, is what Paimon added at the end.

“This lady had a slightly different way of thinking. The reason why this lady had devoted herself to war until that moment was because this lady believed that the unity of the continent was the sole path for demonkind. If we can just subjugate the humans, then the days where demonkind can live bountifully and peacefully will unfold before us. This lady was able to commit slaughter without hesitation because she believed that…….”

However, Paimon realized.

She realized the fact that, on the contrary, if the continent were ever united, then the land of demons will burn in a hellfire.

The fact that the instant the pretext known as the subjugation of

humanity is over, then the warring states period will arrive and tear the demon races asunder.

For a single emperor, the entire demon continent will bleed and be split into two sides just to raise a single King of Kings. What meaning could there possibly be in such a thing? What was that continental conquest for? If the result of fighting for the demon race was the chaos of demonkind, then was that in itself not already an antinomy? Paimon pondered and continued to ponder…….

And she arrived at a conclusion.

“Humans, are a necessary evil.”

At a self-evident fact.

“We may also be a necessary evil to the humans as well. We need each other. If either side of humans or demons never existed, then we would have gone to an eternal war against our own kind much sooner.”

A correct deduction.

Paimon let out a sigh.

“Even if the continent were to be united or not, war will still break out anyway. Is that not strange? No commoner desires for war. If their life and assets are guaranteed, then be it humans or demons, they would more than gladly not jump into war. And yet, just why does war continue to occur? The answer is simple.”

Paimon whispered in a small voice.

“The rulers. It is solely because of the individuals in power.”

“…….”

“Imagine if the people could decide on their own whether we should go to war or not. The people have to take upon themselves all

of the hardships that happen during a war on their own. As they have to carry spears by themselves and commit murder, they have to cover the expenses consumed during a war on their own, and they have to bear the remainder of their lives in the cities and villages that will be completely devastated due to the aftermath of war. The people obviously will not easily approve the idea of war.”

A heated feeling started to flow from Paimon’s voice a little bit at a time.

“However, the individuals in power are different. They are not a part of the people. They are the owners of the people. They are fellows who will always bet whatever they possess on a wager if it means that they can possibly obtain a more substantial gain……. This lady came to the revelation. Be it humanity or demonkind, as long as society is being treated as the possession of the people of authority, war can never be stopped!”

Paimon’s pupils, that were as crimson as blood, silently glimmered with rage.

“How foolish were we……!?”

She shouted.

“How dim-witted were we Demon Lords!? We thought that we were working for all of demonkind. We believed that we were fighting for the commoners. And yet, look. The Demon Lords were not actually the ones to have fallen. Only a small minority of Demon Lords bled and died on the battlefield. The ones to have truly been sacrificed———the tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of things that were killed off, were not the Demon Lords, but the very demons whom we were trying to protect……!”

Paimon gritted her teeth.

“Despite that, we believed, we thought that it was a flag for demonkind. It was a hypocrisy and a deception……. Even if the continent were united, hypocrisy most likely will not disappear. In the

end, deception will never cease in human villages or even demon towns. By blazing more splendidly, it is clear that it will burn that and this side of the mountain range, the human and demon continents, and the entire world. Within a war that would never vanish anyway, we were pushing them into a flame that could never be extinguished due to the single justification that we were authority figures!”

The scenery, once more.

Instead of a pure white space, a battlefield.

Instead of fluttering cherry blossom petals, scattering ashes.

Instead of a tranquil stillness, the screams cried out by humans and demons.

Slaughter, just endless slaughter.

“It was this lady’s mistake!”

With the burning world behind her, Paimon cried out.

“It was not the fault of the humans who had become commoners. It was not the fault of the demons who had become subjects, either. The delusion that an ideal society would unfold if we led the world and governed over society, that deep-seated grudge was the cause of every tragedy!”

That was why.

Indeed, that was why Paimon had suddenly started to cling to me. She knew what meaning the speech, which I had created, contained. She believed that she had discovered cordiality within the proclamation that I had prepared bastardly.

Demon Lord Paimon was a **republican**.

“Dantalian, the speech that human child had recited, this lady guesses that you are the one who had actually written it. A society

where a minority of rulers have a monopoly over everything is wrong. Anyone. No, to be more exact, a society where all people have authority must unfurl. That is why this lady wishes to make a request of you.”

“.....”

“Please come underneath this lady’s flag. The Plains Faction, Barbatos cannot shoulder you. You will be thrown away. You will be tossed aside. However, this lady is different. This lady is capable of understanding your thoughts. This lady can support whatever path you decide to take as much as you desire.”

Both of Paimon’s eyes shined with certainty.

“.....”

This.

How should I say it?

This is a masterpiece.

Using Paimon’s resolve here and controlling her to my desire was simple. However, if she appeals to me this passionately, then even I, who’s pessimistic towards the world, would have something I wish to slightly ask her.

The direction itself where Paimon was pointing the end of her fan was correct. In the end, republicans will be the ones to obtain influence. However, in order to say the single phrase ‘in the end’, just how much blood has to be shed?

It was not on the level of tens of thousands. It was not to the degree of something like hundreds of thousands, either. Millions, they had to be massacred millions of times and then some, at that. Is the simple term ‘in the end’ able to endure the weight of that blood? Of course, it is something that does not very much matter to me, Paimon. I am curious as to how resolved you are…….

“Your Highness Paimon, I apologize, but in my eyes, I can only see you as an idealist. I can positively say that in order to establish a republic society, as Your Highness Paimon has implied, then that in itself will require a countless number of sacrifices.”

“This lady thinks so as well.”

Did she really? Was she truly determined to let a certain amount of blood flow? Referentially, I am keeping in mind the possibility that it will take more than a million lives in order to defeat the Imperial Princess Elizabeth. Have you also swallowed down that much venom?

Do not worry. I am a kind gentleman. Regardless of my benefits, I was sufficiently ready to test your intensity.

“Think about it a little bit more. After achieving the unity of the continent, the people will shed a countless amount of blood. In order to accomplish republicanism, the people will have to bleed just as much as well. Either way, the commoners will be sacrificed. Is that not so?”

Whether we chase after Barbatos’ ideal or Paimon’s ideal, the people are going to be the ones to be sacrificed anyway. If that was the case, then Paimon, I am somewhat curious.

“Why is Her Excellency Barbatos incapable and yet Your Highness Paimon is?”

“.....”

“If you are unable to answer this, then Your Highness is nothing more than another person in power as well. In order to achieve one’s goal, you will burn the world and lure the people, who are blinded by the flames, into being moths. Of course, I do not personally dislike that sort of thing.....”

I did not really fancy the fact that you were still pretending to be detached.

“Your Highness Paimon, I do not have even the slightest intention to criticize your idea in itself. I think that it is noble. However, is Barbatos’ unwavering will not beautiful as well?”

“.....”

“Therefore, if you wish to bring me into the Mountain Faction, then convince me. If you are going to convince me, then do not simply preach about the rightness of your idea. Show me your plan. Unfold your blueprint. Republicanism, that is all fine. So concretely, how do you intend to shed only a small amount of blood? Is there a possibility?”

Paimon closed her mouth.

As expected, did she have no answer? Regardless, I was not disappointed by that. Why Paimon, who was my political rival, had relentlessly dashed towards me the moment the speech was over, I was satisfied with finding out just that. Furthermore, there was no one easier to exploit than an idealist politician who was filled to the brim with desire. This is something to look forward to.

I shrugged my shoulders.

“It seems it is about time to wake up from this dream, soon. As a matter of fact, I already have a previous engagement with Her Excellency Barbatos. It is fine. I do not plan to go around and say in public that Your Highness Paimon is a republican. Rest assured and.....”

“There is.”

I paused.

Paimon was staring straight at me.

“If it is a blueprint, then without a doubt, this lady has established one.”

“.....”

“Dantalian, this lady is not only slow-witted. 400 years ago, before the term republicanism could be applied to this lady’s ideal, this lady had already established a plan thoroughly.”

An amusing grandiloquence. I narrowed my eyes and tried to feel out Paimon’s intention. I gazed at her with eyes that looked as if they were asking ‘So?’, and pressured her to continue speaking.

“This lady thought that instead of a society that was like the one within the demon continent, where tradition was excessively firm, would it not be a bit easier to establish a republic within the human society? That in order to figure out whether a republic will work or not, this lady must test it out on the other side of the mountain range first.”

Don’t tell me.

Paimon’s face was steadfast. Her sharp eyes contained the fierceness of a revolutionary who had no doubts about the path they had to take. For the first time in quite a long while, I was at a loss for words and merely fumbled my tongue.

“What do you.....”

“The Republic of Batavia.”

Paimon spoke.

“It is the sole republic within the human continent. Have you never thought that it was strange? The fact that within the continent, where kingdoms and empires are running rampant, there is a single remote nation that claims to be a republic? Dantalian, do you, perhaps, think that that sort of induced nation formed all on its own?”

“.....”

A shock struck my head.

I felt that a truth, which no history book possessed and no one could have possibly known, was approaching. While carefully glancing at me, who was in that state, Paimon gripped both ends of her skirt and spoke. She bent her waist forward like a lady who was greeting her partner for the first time within a ballroom. With a gesture that was detached and elegant in all respects.

“This lady shall introduce herself for the first time, Dantalian, the man who is trying to become the king of peasants.”

A good-natured smile was placed on Paimon’s lips.

“This lady’s name is Paimon. A monarch of the 9th Rank and the one who had unduly been bestowed the title of Demon Lord of Benevolence. The representative of the dignified demonkind and one of the lords who occupies one of the 72 seats. And———.”



“—————And, the leader of the Republic of Batavia.”

"Is this, that?"

"They say that's this."

"Fuck. We need someone who can actually read if we're going to decide whether this is that or that is this."

"Does anyone here know how to read?"

"Mm. If there was, do you think they'd be rolling around here with people like you?"

"Among the letters, I at least know how to pronounce half of them out loud. Despite my looks, our household has some backbone."

"Even if it's a bone, it's probably a small bone. If you're going to read, then you should be able to read everything, what's up with only being able to read half? There are so many ways people can display their incompetence."

"Then you read it."

"I can read it roughly..... I'll read as much as I can. Well. Hey, make sure you two keep a proper lookout, okay? They say that 200 guys got fucked up after reading this in the unit next to ours. Two hundred."

"Quiet." "Shh." "Shut up." "Zip your lips." "Read it." "Quietly."

"Let's see. Mm, since you pronounce this as 'ah'....."

"Ah'?"

"Mm. Humankind. Listen....."

"Shh."

"Did you hear the news?"

"I heard the rumors."

"I heard 10 guys were executed by decapitation all at once because they got caught secretly reading the treasonous book."

"I don't get why people try to read something like that. We're already on a battlefield where it's easy to lose our lives, but do they want to waste their lives more easily?"

"Who knows. I don't get it, either....."

"Humankind. Listen."

"Listen."

"All of history until now has been the history of class strife."

"There are two wars in the world. One is the war between humans and demons..... what. Isn't this obvious?"

"Ah. Fuck. Stop blabbering."

"Is it difficult to just read what we tell you to read? Either your eyes are a pair of cuckoos or your ears are infected. I personally think that your brain is just retarded."

"Look, this fucker is talking prettily."

"And so? What's next?"

".....They say more were caught yesterday. And they were executed. All of them."

"No, why are there more bastards who die from reading some words than assholes who die fighting in battle?"

"At all costs, root out the source of evil and capture them."

"But, Your Excellency. Someone is purposely spreading it throughout the armies."

"Who?"

"I do not know. Yesterday, we confiscated the upper distributions and uncovered a pile of the manuscripts……."

"I saw prostitutes hiding them on their bodies. Since the soldiers would receive capital punishment if they were discovered with it in their possessions, the trend now is to just leave the books with the prostitutes. Now, when they're on their way to buy those girls' bodies, they come back after reading the manuscript. There is also quite the amount of prostitutes who can easily read words……."

"Speaking honestly. There is a limit to regulating this."

"The situation in our ally's troops is at least better. Since Her Highness, the Imperial Princess has unrivaled popularity by nature, the occasion where her soldiers' minds waver is rare."

"But the soldiers of other nations……."

"Shh." "Shut up." "Quiet." "Zip your lips." "Quietly."

"The fact that there is a more tenacious war than that."

"A war that has been ongoing for the past 1,500 years without a single moment of rest, at that."

"Do you, mankind, know what that war is?"

"That's." "That's." "That's." "That's." "That's."

"We cannot take the heads of every single prostitute!"

"Each time a prostitute is killed off, a means to relieve the sexual desires within our troops disappears. Commander, please forgive this major's discourtesy. However, we cannot go to war with soldiers who have been blinded by their sexual desires!"

"The nobles of our country, who had their distributions confiscated, are complaining. They said that they will start a trial once the war is over and we return to the capital……."

"Those rotten bastards. Even though they are swines that are

safely living idly in the rear……!"

"That is the devastating war which lasts forever.."

"Compared to that, the war between the humans and demons is foolish. The humans and demons have conflicted against one another merely 8 times since the beginning of the world, however, that massive war has continued on every year, every month, every day, and every second."

"Free citizens." "Slaves." "Aristocrats." "Commoners." "Barons."
"Serfs."

"The suppressors."

"The oppressed."

"All of the Crusaders combined, the number of people who were executed for treason yesterday has finally reached 100. One hundred people in a single day. Deserters and criminals. The number of soldiers who violated orders has not even been counted yet. At this rate, we may end up collapsing before we can even have a proper battle."

"There must be spies somewhere."

"They are not normal spies, either. Spies who possess quite the organizational power…… I am certain that spies, with a control that is comparable to that of a single nation, are acting consistently behind the scenes."

"It is already beyond our capacity to face the enemies in our front, but are there now betrayers pushing their way into our rear? This is quite the amazing two-front warfare. I did not possibly think that the day where I was jealous of the demon society would ever come."

"We need to take drastic measures."

"Your Highness, your decision. Other units are already participating in the cause."

"A new age is unfurling."

"Humankind." "Solely become swords." "Humankind." "Solely become spears." "Humankind." "Solely become whips." "Raise your axes." "Grab your crossbows." "Arm yourselves." "Fight." "While following General Laura....." "If you surrender to the general, then she will certainly lead us to a new world." "As she is our guide." "She is our leader." "The true revolutionist." "The person standing at the front lines of humans and demonkind—."

Laura De Farnese.

Translator's Notes

1. [\[↑\] Mares](#) and [succubi/incubi](#) are generally being treated as the same race here.
2. [\[↑\]](#) You = Crescent Alliance.

Chapter Four

The Courier Who Knows
the Address of Hell

▯ The King of Peasants, Rank 71st, Dantalian
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 8
Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance, Simple Prison

Why did I not think further into this?

Something that was in Paimon's hand was passed on to the Imperial Princess Elizabeth much too easily. I simply thought that it was because Paimon was a traitor to the Crescent Alliance, no, because she was a traitor to our kind. However, how would it be if I were to change my way of thinking and look back at it?

If Paimon had already established a group within the human continent on her own. If she were neither simply on the demons' side nor on the humans' side, and merely moved according to whichever side benefited her the most.

“.....”

Paimon was closely interrelated with the Keuncuska Firm. The Keuncuska Firm was a large merchant association that did not discriminate between races and had their reach spread out to various places across the continent. Adding to that, they had an ironclad rule where their executives were selected by their skills alone, disregarding their stratum and status.

———What if, by a very rare chance, they were colluding with a republic nation?

Rank 9th Paimon. The person who loved the humans more than anyone else and ended up betraying her own kind. In the original timeline, she was a woman who was criticized as a bizarre whore and

an uncommon betrayer of her own kind. That was the typical image I had for Paimon until now. The fact that Paimon was involved in the founding of the Republic of Batavia, be it from even ⟨Dungeon Attack⟩, it was a fact that I did not hear from anywhere……!

No, stay calm. Be composed. Although an excessively large variable had appeared in the path of comprehending the situation of the continent henceforth, this was something that I can still handle. Now then. Let's calmly get a grasp of the situation.

“.....The leader of the Republic of Batavia? What do you mean?”

“Oh dear. It seems you are finally showing a slightly grim expression.”

Paimon hid her mouth behind her fan and giggled. As if a refreshing music note was attached to the end of her sentence, she appeared to be delighted. No, I was certain that she was delighted. She might as well be bobbing her head side to side and humming a tune.

“Aah, this lady said it. This lady ended up saying it in the end. It was something that must not be told to anyone, truly. It cannot be helped. If you ask this lady ‘what can you possibly do’ in such a provoking way, then this lady’s head will quickly become heated.”

What was that?

“Ah. This lady is not blaming you, in particular, Dantalian. This lady merely spoke in the way which she wished to speak. Just that, since even a single moment would be fine, this lady desired to see the sight of your misfortunate face turning grim!”

Paimon smiled broadly.

A bright smile that did not have even a single ulterior motive.

“.....”

I fell further into a haze. Just how far did her sincerity go and from where did her lies begin? Her intentions could not be read because of that fake innocent smile of hers. There was absolutely no chance that every single one of her words, which she had uttered, were sincere. Damn it, that was impossible for a politician. Since Paimon was different compared to any other person I had ever met, I ended up furrowing my brow.

“Well, it is fine. Generally, whenever this lady acts according to her emotions, the result strangely ends up better, after all. The Gods most likely adore this lady. Behold, this lady was even able to see your dazed face as a result, Dantalian. It is a profit.”

Oh ho ho.

Paimon crudely laughed over her fan. They say that laughter had a characteristic of becoming more degraded the more elegant it was, and this was exactly that case. While I was listening to Paimon laugh, I had a revelation.

There was no doubt about this.

Absolutely not like Lapis, the complete opposite of Barbatos, and slightly different compared to Farnese———this woman in front of me was also a formidable **maniac**. Furthermore, she was also, perhaps, a natural maniac. A type of lunatic that I had yet to encounter or experience.

“Ehem. Although this lady wishes to enjoy this moment a little bit longer, should we get to the main topic? Even if this lady is referred to as the Queen of Mares, this is more difficult than one can imagine. Earlier, you obliquely hinted that you wished to leave soon, but it is at the point where this lady is the one who wishes for you to quickly leave. This lady’s magic is depleting in real time.”

Paimon smiled with her eyes. Her eyes were stretched narrowly like that of a cat.

“.....Or should we meet separately later on and continue our

conversation then? You must be quite exhausted after having such a heated discussion with Barbatos, Dantalian. It is fine if this lady shows you consideration, you know?”

This woman…… if she thinks she has the superiority, then she was the type of person who unhesitatingly teased the opposition by using that high ground!

What did she mean by ‘we must denounce the people in power’!? Are you not reveling in the enjoyment of authority the most!? This was why I despised hypocrites!

“Okay. This lady understands, so please stop looking at this lady as if she were some insane woman. Therefore, what should this lady talk about first? Mm. Yes, establishing a republic was not an easy task. Truly, there was a countless number of trials and errors.”

Paimon waved her fan pleasantly.

“However, this lady succeeded.”

The surrounding scenery changed to show a village. It was a peaceful fishing hamlet that was placed beside the vast ocean. Even in a place where several boats were shabbily settled on top of a mud flat, it gave off a scent which informed people that it was inhabited. Once Paimon drew an oblique downward line with her fan, time was fast forwarded.

Citizens gathered, a dock was built, and the dock developed into a harbor. As the heights of the buildings grew taller in real time, a pure white rampart formed and wrapped around the entire city like a white snake. Waterways flowed through various areas of the city, making it into a beautiful city of water.

There were 12 temples huddled up in the center of the town, every hour a bell from one of the temples would ring and the people, without having to even raise their heads, were able to discern the time of the day by the tone of the bell. The sounds of bells resonated endlessly and reached out far into the distant blue ocean.

“It took 150 years for the capital of the Republic of Batavia, Amstel, to be built.”

Paimon looked over the ocean. Paimon’s gaze was gentle as if she were watching over an endearing child.

“We mobilized the wealth, information, and military power we had accumulated during that time and started a war of independence. That took 50 years. With the pretext of inheriting the idea of the Old Republic, we started an extended war. That took another 50 years. Lastly, with the justification of accepting other races as official citizens, we started a war of liberation. This lady skillfully used the 7th Crescent Alliance expedition here. At last, after basing everything, the independence, expansion, and liberation, on the international treaty, we were acknowledged.”

Paimon silently spread out her arms. Before her eyes, forty ships drifted over the ocean waves and moved forward.

“A good 150 years. That was how much time it took to establish the League of Merchants, the Republic of Batavia, that consists of 13 cities.”

“.....”

Paimon silently gazed at the scenery, which she had created, for a long time. I had no other choice but to follow Paimon’s silence with my own. Although I have experienced all sorts of things throughout my life, this was the first time in my life meeting an outstanding individual who had founded a single nation.

The nation was not a normal nation, either. Within the center of this medieval age where kings and barons still had immense influence, she had fully stuck a single republic nation on the map. After facing this feat, I did not have the decency to move my tongue unrestrictedly.....

“Earlier, you asked this lady in return whether a perfect society was possible.”

With an 'Ufufu', Paimon laughed and scratched her cheek.

"No. It is impossible."

"....."

"Even if humans and demons are equally accepted as citizens in the Republic of Batavia, there is still contempt and discrimination there. Despite that, in this lady's eyes..... it is a bit better compared to 200 years ago. It may be by a handspan. But perhaps, are the politicians, who are like this lady, not living for that handspan?"

With an endlessly modest and pure face, she spoke.

"This lady is able to say this since she has lived for 500 years now. Although time is excessively slow, so it sometimes deceives our eyes and occasionally disguises itself to appear as if it were not flowing, even now time continues to move by minutes and seconds that even a handspan cannot erase. Some people refer to that as the flow of history. Believers will most likely refer to that as a destiny which the Gods have predetermined."

Paimon shook her head.

"However, this lady refers to that as simply the fulfillment of one's dreams. Because life is cruel and abject, it will always disappoint us. Thus, the day may come where both you and this lady fall and all of humanity and demonkind become lowly. This lady will not request of you to overcome that nor will she ask you to be overflowing with hope and leap over every obstacle. Just that———."

Paimon stuck out her hand.

"Until that day arrives, will you not be together with this lady?"

I glanced down at her slender fingers.

Mare. A race that could control a person's dream however they pleased.

As they teased and satisfied people with all sorts of pleasures, mares desired for eternal happiness within those dreams alongside the person they were with. However, this woman, who had approached me, refused to settle with just dreams and was personally pioneering a reality. In order to make the reality itself into a single dream and embrace it.

I nodded my head. There was no other individual who deserved to be called the Queen of Mares more than this girl who was in front of me.

“That is all fine, but I have a single question.”

There was one final thing which remained in my head that also weighed on my mind.

In the original course of history, Paimon betrayed demonkind. She loved the hero. Compared to the persona, which Paimon had shown me right now, and the appearance she displayed while on the path of history, which she was destined to go down, the two were much too different. Just how did she end up like that? I was so curious that I could no longer endure.

“Yes. You may ask this lady anything.”

“It will sound like a strange question. Your Highness Paimon will most likely be unable to understand the reason behind why I am asking this sort of inquiry. Regardless, it is a question that is personally quite important to me. I will be grateful if you provide me with a sincere response, if possible.”

“Those are quite peculiar words.”

Paimon opened her eyes wide.

“Now that this lady thinks about it, Sir Dantalian has always been far from normal. You are also going out with Barbatos……. Although it is not something which this lady should be saying. Mm, the human child, who you appointed as your acting general, seemed to have a

severe flaw as well. She appears normal on the outside, but is the error on the inside?”

I casually ignored the slander.

“For example, let us pretend that there is an incredibly powerful human.”

“Hm. How powerful?”

“The person is simply immensely powerful. A hundred, no, a thousand times stronger than us. Only the corpses of demons will be piled up on that human’s path. Even the Demon Lord of Eternity, Baal, cannot defeat that person on his own.”

“Oh dear.”

Paimon made an expression on her face that appeared as if she were slightly troubled. However, since I had requested beforehand for her to give me a sincere response, she did not make any unnecessary comments. Speaking moderately, a hero has yet to appear in this era. It was also obvious that it would be difficult for her to comprehend my speculation.

“One at a time, that human tactfully faces us Demon Lords separately. So that human is basically subjugating us one by one. If things continued to flow like that, then every last Demon Lord will end up falling in battle. If a situation like this were to occur, Your Highness Paimon, what would you do?”

“.....”

Paimon tilted her head.

“Are the Demon Lords unable to form an alliance and attack ‘that human’ together?”

“Unfortunately, that is not possible. That person does not lead an army. They will meddle with our side while leading a small unit that

consists of either them by themselves or at most 10 people.”

“Hmm. In other words, with a gathering of barely 10 people, they are strong enough to defeat us Demon Lords one by one. So you are telling this lady to imagine such an absurd group, is that right?”

I nodded my head. The hero’s party was approximately 10 people so it was not far from the truth. After contemplating for a moment, Paimon responded.

“How about annihilating them politically through remonstrance?”

“The greatest monarch within the human society places their complete trust onto that human and also supports them. They are a human whose political backing is firm.”

Elizabeth von Habsburg. The culprit behind picking out the hero, who was nothing more than a villager from a fire-fallow village, and raising them to be the figurehead of mankind. It was the same as how I had set forward Farnese as the figurehead of the Crescent Alliance.

“Mmm. Is the human society, perhaps, united into a single nation?”

“That is yet to be the case. Fortunately or unfortunately.”

The reason being, the day Elizabeth united the entire continent was after the extermination of every single Demon Lord.

“Within the situation that you are speculating, Dantalian, which nation does the monarch, who you claimed to be the greatest, lead? Is it the Empire of Habsburg? Anatolia? Surely it would not be Francia.”

“Yes, it is Habsburg.”

“If that is the case, then this lady sees a path.”

Paimon shrugged her shoulders.

“This lady will split humanity into two sides.”

“.....”

“Although the Empire of Habsburg is mighty, they are located at the center of the continent. As much as that is the case, it is a nation that the surrounding countries are wary of just as much. This lady shall control the surrounding nations appropriately and incite them into being hostile towards Habsburg. That is right, if it is this lady, then she will instigate the Empire of Francia and the Kingdom of Brittany. Those are the places which this lady has placed the most numbers of spies in, after all.”

I was quiet.

Since the words were quiet, my thoughts became quiet as well.

In the original history, the hero and Farnese opposed one another. As the hero represented the Empire of Habsburg, Farnese acted for the Kingdom of Brittany.

Aah.

Before I knew it, Paimon had continued talking.

“It will be dangerous if Habsburg were to keep growing like this. You all must actively cooperate in order to keep Habsburg in check. Throw out a bait, that goes along those lines, and do whatever this lady can in order to lure in one of the two nations. If both sides take the bait, then that would be the best case scenario. By doing so, this lady will induce a civil war between the humans. Once human society falls into chaos, that would be the opportunity. This lady will deal with that so-called powerful human in that moment.”

Was that the case?

“How is that, Sir Dantalian?”

Paimon.

“If it is this much, then would it not be enough to get rid of them?”

Was it you?

While the other Demon Lords were helplessly being done in by the Imperial Princess and the hero, in a future that had ended up like that, was the person who had plotted the division of humankind, the culprit who moved behind-the-scenes, none other than———you?

“.....”

I pressed my forehead. My thoughts were instantly organized. The plan which I had made for conquering the continent from this point on had changed. The X mark, which I had brandished over Paimon’s name on the map that was drawn within my head, had promptly disappeared. It would be too much of a waste if I were to be hostile towards, or tried to purge, this sort of individual.

Except, there was a thirst that had yet to be quenched. If she filled me in on even this, then be it the Mountain Faction or anywhere else, I will more than gladly squeeze in. Now, answer me this.

“Certainly, it is an excellent move. However, it is still lacking. Even that method ends up failing. Due to the fact that the monarch, who governs over the Empire of Habsburg, is truly the formidable mastermind, they are able to destroy both the Empire of Francia and the Kingdom of Brittany at the same time. In an incredibly short period of time, at that. Now it would be exceedingly difficult to split apart the human society.”

“.....Dantalian.”

Paimon leered at my direction as if she were admonishing me.

“How can such a monarch possibly exist? Even the speculation that a human who is stronger than Sir Baal appearing is already a reckless suggestion that was difficult to swallow, but for there to also be a monarch who is powerful enough to nearly unite the entire continent with one action. This lady is not particularly complaining, but is that not impossible?”

“That is correct. Please think about it while taking in that impossibility as a premise.”

“Umm. Hmm. Mm…….”

Paimon chewed on the end of her fan with her teeth. By the looks of it, that seemed to be an old habit of hers. If you display that sort of habit, then your inner thoughts can be read by the opposition, making it an incredibly bad habit. Does she not seem so experienced at times that it makes it difficult for me to read her intentions, and yet, in times like this, does she not seem immature like some child? Truly, this woman was incomprehensible.

I wonder how much time had passed. Paimon laughed dejectedly.

“Well, what else can this lady do? If that is the case, then this lady will resort to even **selling her body**.”

“…….”

“It does not matter whether that human is a man or a woman. Ehem, despite how this lady may appear, this lady is the Queen of Mares. If it is simply a single feeble-minded human, then this lady is confident that she will be able to capture them with ease. This lady will approach that human while pretending to be doing them as many favors as possible. This lady will then utilize all sorts of means and methods in order to make them fall in love with this lady!”

Like that.

“Ah, is that, perhaps, also not allowed? Haa. This lady surrenders. It is this lady’s defeat. This lady is no longer able to think up of any more plausible ideas. No, in the first place, Sir Dantalian was the one who had brought forward too many absurd conditions. It is not this lady’s fault. Even if you were to ask this question to someone that is not this lady, they would all raise a white flag…….”

All of my questions have been answered.

— It is this lady's first time meeting a man such as yourself.

— This lady shall bestow upon you the right to steal this lady's lips, Mr. Self-entitled Hero.

All of those things were an act.

It was a desperate struggle in order to seduce the calamity known as the hero.

— Yes, this lady is a Demon Lord. This lady has deceived you, Hero. However, is that a problem? This lady loves you. Leaping over all sorts of favor and spite, be it race or status, enemy or ally, this lady simply loves you truly. Ever since the moment this lady had first laid her eyes upon you, and for all eternity.

—Demons and humans living together. This lady had started to dream of that possibility after meeting you. However, it cannot be helped, can it? Since dreams are similar to that of the fluttering of frail flower petals, this lady cannot blame you.

It was all a tactical deceit.

— Humans are truly amazing. Did you know that there is a country referred to as a republic nation somewhere on the continent? This lady heard that humans, fairies, and dwarves all live equally without exerting or receiving any discrimination whatsoever. The day where even humans and demons are able to live together harmoniously like that will one day arrive. Yes, this lady has no

doubts about it.

—— This is an already dying body. Could you not bestow upon this lady a final kiss?

Paimon.

Even when she was breathing her last breath, she implored love from her enemy. In the exact moment the shadow of death had enshrouded her face, the last thing Paimon felt was the hero's lips. In the end, her death was the enemy's breath and kiss. For that to be someone's last moment, it was excessively cruel. Exactly what emotions were going through Paimon's mind as she requested for that kiss?

Her love, affection, confession, blushed cheeks that appeared as if she were shy, the movement of her head as she shook it, the hundreds of lines she had spoken, and the thousands of body gestures she had made, what was going through the Queen of Mares' head while she was doing this entire performance on her own? Just what sort of venom did she have to embrace in order to make her performance of affection, that was directed towards the enemy of her kind who was standing before her, possible……?

Okay.

I will admit it.

From this moment on, you are no longer my political rival. A cooperator. You are a political partner like Barbatos. How could I possibly leave alone this rare model of an actor?

Your twisted lamentation. Your resolve that had soaked and tempered that twistedness and struck it with a hammer until it was stretched out properly. I had taken a liking to it. Even if I have to grab and drag both you and Barbatos by the collars, I will lead you two on top of the stage.

Be grateful. I am selecting you retired actors, who were once destined to merely meet your ends while playing supporting characters, to perform leading roles. The fact that you two treated each other as enemies was of low importance to me. If you are going to fight, then fight. Except, exchange blows and slander one another in an area behind the stage where I cannot see. Since you both are now actors who will be performing with me, you have the **obligation** to be beautiful while on stage.

After making a decision in my mind, I moved my lips.

“Your Highness Paimon.”

“Yes, Dantalian?”

“Please come visit me at my prison once the morning sun has risen. I shall decide my position at that time.”

Be relieved, Paimon.

You have escaped from my purge list.

However, you will have to be drenched in the blood of others just as much instead.

▯ The King of Peasants, Rank 71st, Dantalian
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 8
Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance, Simple Prison

It was a day where the cold was evidently clearing up.

In each place, where the firm earth had melted and became soft, muddy water flowed over the ground as if it were oozing. The soil, that had compacted tightly because of the cold spring rain, was just barely able to become disgorged after it had received the rays from the spring sun. It was an unsightly spring since there were no flowers or trees in sight. It seemed as if spring had yet to arrive because of that. Amidst this season that felt as if it were still approaching, two people were approaching from the distance.

“.....”

“.....”

Two people were walking this way from the distance. The two noticed each other and stopped momentarily. They then resumed their way towards me while furrowing their respective brows.

The first side to open their mouth was Barbatos.

“Fucking Hell. Dantalian, what’s this bitch doing here? Don’t tell me you called her here. I advise you to tell me that you didn’t. Hurry up and chase this bitch away. If you don’t, then there’s a good chance that the answer, which I contemplated throughout the entire night to decide, will change in less than a minute.”

“Oh dear, this side is the one who should be making a complaint.”

Like a piano that had come in competitively during an orchestra performance, Paimon then followed up.

“This lady had personally received an invitation from Dantalian to visit around dawn. You coming here at this time is purely a coincidence, is that not so? If anything, if there is a person who deserves to be chased out of here the most, then would it not be you?”

“This bitch said some nonsense a couple of days ago about Dantalian being hers, but it seems she’s completely nuts now. Seriously, it feels as if the smell of shit is going to start flowing out of her mouth.”

Barbatos raised her middle finger on her left hand and made a V shape with her index and middle fingers on her right hand. One side was a gesture commonly used in the demon continent, while the other side was a gesture often used in the human society. Regardless, both sides contained the same implication of ‘respectfully, go fuck yourself’. By the looks of it, it seems Barbatos thought that gifting only a single ‘fuck you’ to Paimon would go against courtesy. That was why, in order to make sure that anyone would be able to tell that they were being given the bird, she had presented a ‘fuck you’ on a global perspective.

“Beasts that shit out of their asses are more aristocrat-like. There is nothing that can be done for a crazy bitch who shits out of her mouth. Listen carefully, whore. Dantalian is not your object. Regardless of whether you invaded Dantalian’s dream and raped him or not.”

“Haa? What kind of preposterous delusion……. Barbatos, although this lady does not have the duty to go along with your vulgar tone, this lady will at least clearly tell you a single fact. This lady did not engage in a physical relationship with Dantalian. Purely in a mental meaning, that is what this lady meant by having taken Dantalian. In other words, it contains a psychological context that is so pure that someone who is of a low birth like you cannot possibly be able to comprehend it. It is all your foolish misunderstanding and prejudice.”

“Look at this? A female is clearly emitting an air that she had bedded a male, so either my eyes are retarded or there’s absolutely

nothing to misunderstand. Aha, or did you two, perhaps, copulate using the rear hole instead of the front? ‘That was what I had slightly misunderstood from the air that was floating around you two fuckers right now’, are you trying to tell me some bullshit that goes along this line?”

“It seems you are still unable to comprehend words. Is it your ears that are weird, or, as this lady had expected, is it your brain that is rotten? If your hearing is broken, then that is understandable. If your brain is out of order, then there is room for sympathy. However, if your personality is the thing that is corroded, then that is beyond redemption.”

“This underhanded whore…….”

“What will you do about it, gum-scab chest?”

How beautiful.

The path that must be crossed in order for life to become a single melody was distant, but these two were able to extract tunes abundantly by merely crossing each other with swears. They were gifted singers to one another. Nevertheless, I had no other choice but to open my mouth and cease the performance.

“The two of you, please calm down.”

If possible, I wanted to keep watching over your argument, however right now was the time to cooperate, not fight. The two heard my voice and turned to look this way.

“I did, indeed, call the both of you here. It is fine to quarrel, but please do it after listening to what I have to say.”

“Ah, well, that bitch was the one who started it first since she screwed me over by refusing the military trial, right? For starters, let me receive an apology since it’s her fault and not mine.”

“This lady had advised you to not punish Dantalian in the first

place. But you were most likely unable to hear this lady's words since your ears, brain, and personality are corroded three times over."

"Does this bitch want to die?"

"Go ahead and try."

This is troubling. I sincerely want to continue listening to this.

Thus, I let them be for a single moment.

Once an hour had passed, the two of them were breathing heavily due to exhaustion. If I were to give my personal impression, then even if you combined all of the profanities that I heard throughout my entire life, that would still be lacking when compared to the profanities which I had heard during the past hour. Also, consider the fact that I did not receive only one or two obscenities from people. That was a remarkable achievement.

"Is it fine for me to talk now?"

"....."

"....."

There was no objection so it was unanimous.

I cleared my throat.

"I, as well, am fully aware of the wrongdoing which I have committed. A Demon Lord's authority originates from the fact that they represent all of demonkind. However, the war speech, which was only bestowed upon Demon Lords, was stolen from them by a human. The Demon Lord, who should represent all of demonkind the most, had passed on the right to give the speech to a being, who cannot and absolutely should not represent all of demonkind the most; a human..... The demons would have no other choice but to carry suspicions. Why did a human child have to represent us? Has the Crescent Alliance lost its pride? In truth, was there no other

talented individual out there who could represent us besides that human.....?”

I shrugged my shoulders.

“Even if the commoners did not harbor any doubts, the problems continue. There are quite the number of Demon Lords who carry dissatisfaction towards the current system of the Crescent Alliance which is led by the Plains Faction-Mountain Faction-Neutral Faction group. Those people will be the first ones to take action in order to circulate doubt. They will claim that the current Crescent Alliance does not have the qualification to act for the demon race. Your authority itself will tremble.”

There were many discontented elements. Rank 1 Baal, Rank 2 Agares..... The Demon Lords with the highest amount of prestige did not take part in the Crescent Alliance. They were most likely making an implicit complaint.

“They are merely looking forward to the day we fail. The Demon Lords who have started this war are us, and the Demon Lords who will have to take the responsibility for the loss of the war will also be us. The right to criticize us will be presented to the Demon Lords who, from beginning to end, did not participate in the expedition.”

Barbatos and Paimon, they both fell under the category of being faction leaders. Although their respective political ideologies were different, because one side was a radical party and the other was a moderate party, they both had the same single common ground, the fact that they were both onboard the same boat known as the Crescent Alliance.

We were a group that shared a common destiny.

It would be troublesome if I did not make them realize this soon.

“Your Excellency Barbatos. Your Highness Paimon. We must become one and form an alliance as soon as possible. If we do not, then the only thing that will be awaiting us in the future is ruin.”

“.....”

“.....”

After the two of them had adjusted their breaths, they glared at each other.

“But I lived until now just so I could torture this bitch.”

“What a coincidence. It is also this lady’s life goal to trample over you.”

It took 30 minutes this time.

I beamed while the two panting people were standing before me.

“I understand that the two of you are alive because you have not killed each other yet. However, what about this? Does killing each other still have the priority even when there are backstabbers, who have been selling the two of you out, brazenly walking around your military camps?”

“.....What? Backstabbers?”

“For 400 years, the expedition of the Crescent Alliance has failed. During those 400 years, you all have endeavored in order to obtain victory, but the other Demon Lords in the back must have devoted themselves just as much in order to make you all fail. Surely, you do not believe that there would not be even a single traitor within your factions?”

Due to the immensely realistic remark, both Barbatos and Paimon became silent. There was probably something specific that had come to their minds. To a certain degree, they were conscious of the fact that there could be traitors, but they had purposely turned a blind eye to it. Doing that put them more at ease, after all.

Paimon slowly opened her mouth.

“.....Dantalian, this is an action that can never be stopped once it has started. The entire demon continent will be split into two sides and a civil war will begin. It is inadvisable to make enemies in our rear when we are currently in the situation where the Crusaders are located right in front of us.”

“If anything, this moment is the golden opportunity.”

I declared.

“Our forces had suffered a defeat just yesterday. It may have not been a crushing defeat, but a defeat is a defeat. ‘Surely in this situation where we had lost to the Crusaders, they would not attempt to purge the ones who, like themselves, are in the rear’, in the position of those traitors, a purge is something that is incredibly difficult for them to imagine.”

“A defeat on the battlefield is, on the contrary, a quick opportunity to clean out.....”

“Yes. That is correct.”

I nodded my head. While Paimon was calmly dwelling on my words, Barbatos scowled her face at me.

“Wait. Setting aside the traitors, what are we going to do about those Crusader bastards? In the end, a purge is just an act that cuts off your own flesh. We’re already in a state where we’re being pushed back, so we’ll reach a dead end if we become even weaker now.”

“It is fine. Currently, the side that is in more of a crisis is the Crusaders.”

Although I normally used informal language when speaking to Barbatos, no matter how you looked at it, I was an outstanding gentleman since I was going out of my way to use formal language because of the mere fact that Paimon was with us. However, similar to how someone would not notice some dirt stuck underneath their nails, Barbatos seemed to have not noticed my consideration.

“Why’s that?”

“Recall the battle that had unfolded yesterday. Is something not strange? Regardless of how many disparate groups may be mixed in with their forces, the overall movement of the Crusaders was excessively poor. They rushed in the instant Farnese tossed herself out as bait as if they were all waiting for that exact moment.”

“.....”

Barbatos’ eyes became narrow. She immediately understood what I was trying to say. That made the story quick. As expected of Barbatos.

“.....Hoh. That means the speech that human child gave is showing more results than I expected. In order to hold the soldier’s wavering minds tightly, there was a need for them to kill that child.”

“Precisely.”

I raised the corners of my lips.

“The current situation within the Crusaders is probably severe. Even if deserters did not particularly appear, the soldiers’ morale have most likely fallen by themselves. On the other hand, there is a reason why only the officers and men of Habsburg, who are led by the Imperial Princess, are still firm.”

“Because the Imperial Princess’ speech was excellent.”

That was so.

Yesterday’s battle ended with the victory of Farnese and Elizabeth. Farnese’s victory revealed the divided appearance of the Crescent Alliance while Elizabeth’s victory reflected the dreadful morale within the Crusaders. There was nothing more miserable than an army where only a single hero has obtained victory.

“Moreover, multiple nations were nearly annihilated in yesterday’s battle. The credit of saving them goes completely to the Imperial

Princess..... From the generals to the privates, there is most likely unrest looming over them within the Crusaders. Excluding Elizabeth von Habsburg, there is no one else who is dependable. I am certain that this sort of atmosphere is blowing violently through their forces. Furthermore, the leading members of the governments of the other nations would never forgive the spread of this sort of mentality. In the end, before long, the Crusaders will.....”

“.....”

“.....”

Barbatos and Paimon gazed at me, glared at each other, and then turned to look at me once more before nodding deeply. The word that came to mind within the three of our heads was coincidentally the same.

Purge.

Our Crescent Alliance was not the only group that was going to arrive at an internal conflict. Even the Crusaders, while embracing a different reason, will leap into a state of civil war where the victorious humans will purge all of the humans who had been defeated. In other words, from now on.

“———This, is a race against time. According to which army finishes their purge the fastest, and according to how quickly and efficiently they are able to carry it out, the outcome of the war will be decided.”

Paimon muttered quietly.

It was just as she had said. It was solely a race against time.

We had to finish our purge as soon as possible and project a single

condensed military strength. Will the Imperial Princess Elizabeth be first? Will we be first? The fate of the continent will be determined according to that. I fumbled with the pocket watch that was in my pocket. Although a moment of time was a person's everyday time and the time of war, from this point forth, time was simply a moment to slaughter our kind for us. There was no room for hesitation here.

“Identifying the traitors is simple. The two of you both, return to your respective encampments and criticize each other. The reason why we were defeated in yesterday's battle was because the opposite faction had responded to the situation foolishly. You two badmouthing each other whenever you have the time to spare is a daily occurrence anyway so no one will suspect a thing.”

“.....”

“After doing so, ‘Ah, how good would it be if there was a trustworthy ally?’, slip in this remark. In that moment, there will be a couple of fellows who will quietly approach you and offer to liaise you with a ‘Demon Lord who they personally know’. Those people are the traitors.”

Those who try to seize the opportunity of when the three factions are faltering in order to carry out a military takeover.

Those who act as the informant of someone specific and try to lure Barbatos and Paimon.

They were all parasites that deserved to be exterminated.

That night.

Barbatos and Paimon made their way through the dark curtains and came to visit me. Their faces, which were half in doubt when they left at dawn, were now grim. After a long moment of silence, Barbatos began to speak.

“.....There were three people on my side. What about you, whore?”

“Four people. Although they were mostly youngsters with low ranks.....”

Paimon sighed.

“Each one of them was an informant for a different Demon Lord. Sir Baal, Rank 3 Vassago, Rank 4 Gamigin, and Rank 6 Valefor.....”

“Wow. Fuck, that’s nearly the same as me. I got Vassago, Gamigin, and Valefor on my side. Those fucking bastards..... There really is no easy way to deal with these bat-like bastards.”

Barbatos gritted her teeth.

There are approximately 30 Demon Lords who are participating in this war. If 7 of them were informants, then that meant that nearly 1/4 of the entire army were traitors. For leaders, who led a faction, that was a ratio which they had no other choice but to grind their teeth with vexation about. Referentially, this was also a number that did not include the Neutral Faction. Paimon spoke in a worried tone.

“What will we do about Marbas? Since he has departed in order to pillage for supplies in the rear, he will be unable to return for a while.”

“With that old man’s personality, it’ll be a lot better if he isn’t present when we carry out a purge. For someone who looks so sinister, he dislikes shedding unnecessary blood, after all. Once he gets back after the situation is over, we’ll explain it to him then.”

Barbatos made an invidious remark.

“All right. Purge. The Imperial Princess will be after that and then you’ll be last, whore. Until then, I’ll cooperate with you.”

“That is something which this lady should be the one to say since we will be forming an alliance only until everything has been settled. Keep your neck clean until that moment arrives.”

Barbatos gave the middle finger and Paimon showed a V with her middle and index fingers. These two had quite the pretty relationship.

On this side of the cage, I watched the appearance of the two Demon Lords who had snarling faces and appeared as if they were about to tear each other apart. It seems that the moment to be released from this prison has almost arrived. It was short, but it was a beautiful life in prison.

I was still in this prison.

▯ A King's Lone Sword, Human, Laura De Farnese
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 9
Bruno Plains, Dantalian's legion

“Farnese, you definitely said that you could play music, right?”

“Mmm? Indeed, that is the case, Lord.”

Today was the day that hung at the end of the week which His Lordship had forewarned about.

This young lady adjusted her clothes in front of the prison. Different to other commanders, this young lady did not appoint an attendant. This young lady had to manage life on her own, but since this lady was going to consult with His Lordship about what she should do on this day, this young lady was receiving an inspection from His Lordship to see whether she had put on her military uniform properly or not while she was at it.

“This is related to music, but……. Oi, your mantle is crooked there.”

“Where?”

“There. Right there.”

“If Your Lordship only says ‘there’, then how is this young lady supposed to know where that is? What method is this young lady supposed to use in order to figure out where ‘there’ is, when it could be Your Lordship's eyes or balls? Instead of only saying ‘there’, give this young lady some exact directions.”

“Haa, this troublesome child. I have always laid the right direction out for you. Come here so I can fix it myself.”

This young lady approached the prison and left the arrangement of

her clothes to His Lordship. His Lordship pulled on the edge of this young lady's clothes firmly. Tug, tug..... through the thick layer of cloth, this young lady could feel His Lordship's hands entwining here and there. It almost felt as if it were this young lady's first time experiencing the sensation of having another person help put on her clothes.

“So what do you mean by music, Lord?”

“Is it not your hobby to gather skulls and compose scores while those skulls are spread out around you? However, you have only written scores, never have I ever seen you perform them. What sort of conduct is that?”

“This young lady did not feel the particular need to play them.”

This young lady answered honestly.

Music was this young lady's old habit. This young lady was gifted with an excellent sense of hearing to an accursed degree. As this young lady was unable to ever forget something which she had heard, it was indefinitely piled up in a certain corner of this young lady's skull like oil. There were many, many days where the oil, that had accumulated like that, would occasionally become a mirage on its own and play in this young lady's head as if it were an auditory hallucination. It was in those very moments that this young lady would compose scores.

“Since the sound had already flowed through this young lady's head, what reason could there possibly be for this young lady to go out of her way just to perform and repeat the same tune?”

“I am saying this because it seems I will soon be able to leave this prison. I went through this precipitous state in order to protect you, so would it not be your duty to welcome my release from imprisonment? Any song would be fine when I come out so pick out the song that you can play best.”

“The commemoration of Your Lordship's release from prison, is

it.....?”

After hearing the reason, it was logical.

Since this young lady has not even once performed for anyone throughout her entire life, devoting that first experience to His Lordship was sufficient enough to be a present. The fact that His Lordship had to spend a week behind bars because he had covered for this young lady was, as expected, this young lady's burden. Referentially, since His Lordship was a small-minded male by nature, he would never forget a debt. Rather than living while in debt to His Lordship, being able to call it even after devoting some good-for-nothing thing like a first experience was much better.

Right when this young lady was about to nod her head, a question abruptly appeared in her mind and made its way through her lips.

“Lord, this young lady does not mind performing a complimentary concert, but this young lady has a question.”

“It must be nice to be curious about so many things. What is it this time?”

“Is this young lady Your Lordship's doll?”

Suddenly.

His Lordship's hand stopped.

This young lady turned her head back dubiously. His Lordship was silently looking this way. His Lordship's pupils contained a single black color so it was relaxing to stare into them. Black was this young lady's favorite color.

“Who said that to you?”

“The Imperial Princess of the Empire did.”

“.....”

“This young lady apologizes for telling Your Lordship this now. This young lady did not go against your order, Lord. Something like fighting against the Imperial Princess did not occur. However, after the previous battle was over, the Imperial Princess had called for this young lady. The Imperial Princess said this after calmly examining this young lady. Are you a puppet? Are you a corpse? Or are you both? She claimed that it was perplexing since all of the people, who Your Lordship tries to embrace, have only remains left.”

“.....”

“The Imperial Princess said to pass on a message to Your Lordship. That, after meeting your doll, I, Elizabeth von Habsburg, think she is somewhat pretty.”

His Lordship listened up to that point and let out a sigh.

“Were you shaken by those words?”

“This young lady did not waver. Since this young lady is neither a puppet nor a corpse, she is a human who is living properly. Your Lordship had given life to this young lady. That is something which this young lady has never had a shadow of a doubt about.”

“However?”

However.

However.....

This young lady nodded her head.

“As expected, this young lady wondered if she were a child who was wrongly born into this world.”

His Lordship became silent. Even during muteness, emotions did not emerge in His Lordship’s eyes. His Lordship, for someone who mostly displayed trivial emotions to his heart’s content, never expressed even a shred of any serious emotions. Even though people

were generally the complete opposite of that. Since His Lordship was quiet, this young lady continued speaking comfortably.

“This young lady can guess why Your Lordship scrapes together only remains. A ruin will not be lonely when within ruins. If there are only collapsed remains in one’s surroundings, then the wreckage is not something that had simply met its end there, but instead, it is something that feels as if it can continue to stay there and something that appears sufficient on its own. This young lady is able to consider herself to be a normal individual when within that place since Miss Lapis, Captain Humbaba, and the other witches are there. Your Lordship must also be like that in your own right.”

“.....”

“Regardless, we are able to breathe by going into Your Lordship’s embrace, but what does Your Lordship plan to do? Even if Barbatos can hug Your Lordship, is she not incapable of shouldering you? Even if Paimon pulls Your Lordship in, is she not incapable of taking you in whole? Miss Lapis and, as expected, this young lady as well are worried that, on the contrary, Your Lordship may be the one to embrace those two……. Lord, is that okay?”

His Lordship scratched his forehead. After sighing a couple of times, His Lordship soon drew his brow together and flicked this young lady’s forehead.

“Hoah.”

“That is why I have been telling you to quickly become independent, you fool. Look at Lapis. Even if I do not give her any orders, does she not get everything done on her own? It would be great if you all were able to hastily follow Lapis’ example.”

“It feels like the horrors of the world would increase if people followed Miss Lapis’ example…….”

“What nonsense is the person, who should have already easily slaughtered over 10,000 people, saying?”

That was true.

His Lordship took something out from his coat. It was a masquerade ball mask. This young lady tilted her head, unsure of what His Lordship intended to do by handing that mask to this young lady.

“What sort of mask is that?”

“Tomorrow, we will purge every last traitor within the Crescent Alliance. When you perform your concert in celebration of my release, the majority of the Demon Lords taking part in the Crescent Alliance will gather momentarily under the pretext of holding a religious service towards the Gods. Those who are wearing masks will live, and those who are not will die.”

“.....”

I see, a tool to identify friend or foe.

This young lady was curious as to why it was a music performance of all things. This young lady’s performance was bait to attract attention. The Demon Lords will take their seats and will all be watching this young lady. That very moment, when they have lowered their guards, was the prime opportunity to wipe out the traitors in one fell swoop.

“It seems it will be quite the special concert, Lord.”

“Of course, it is the day where I am being released from prison so it should be special, should it not? The preparation of the stage will be taken care of by Barbatos and Paimon. Do not be concerned and just perform. By the time you hit the last key, the bodies of traitors will be sprawled out there.”

This young lady nodded in approval.

“However, you have yet to answer this young lady’s question, Lord. Trying to go past it evasively will not work on this young lady. Please

answer. Is this young lady Your Lordship's doll?"

His Lordship clicked his tongue.

"It seems only your pettiness has increased needlessly. If you are curious about that, then come back after carrying out today's battle. By the time you return, you will have figured out the answer on your own."

Thus, this young lady set forth.



Today was a day where the short rainy season of early spring had ended and the sky had cleared.

Although there were pools of mud still stagnated here and there on the ground, it felt as if they were going to dry up soon because of the hot spring sun. Once the soil has become firm, the war will most likely resume in earnest again. Currently, be it the Crescent Alliance or the Crusaders, they simply sent out detached units occasionally and had minor battles.

This young lady led a single squad and wandered from this side to that side of the great plain. En route, we encountered enemy scouts and assaulted them, but they were barely a problem. It was at the moment when this young lady thought that today was going to simply end like how the past couple of days had. From the other side of the plain, a single group of enemy soldiers gradually rushed towards us. This young lady held her breath for an instant after glancing at the flag the enemy soldiers were carrying.

"....."

A pattern with a blue hydrangea and a buck.

The House of Duke Farnese from the northern region of the Kingdom of Sardinia.

The flag of the family that this young lady was born and raised in was there.

“Araa? For some small unit like that to try and pick a fight with us, they have a lot of guts. What should we do, General? If you tell us to wipe them out, then we will immediately.”

“.....”

“General? The likes of us can only move if you give us a command.”

This young lady merely answered the Captain of the Royal Guard, Humbaba’s words with silence. Even while this young lady was quiet, time steadily flowed and the enemy soldiers gradually drew near. Then, the enemies soon stopped.

Shortly after, a single man came out from the center of the enemy group while riding on a war horse. The man, who was brilliantly wearing a blue set of armor and helmet, spread his arms out wide and shouted.

“Laura! My loveable child! This father of yours is here!”

———By that one line, regardless of whether they were allies or enemies, every single common soldier stared at this young lady.

The bewilderment on the soldiers’ faces was evident. Especially the witches who were a part of the Royal Guard. The witches were aware of the secret behind this young lady’s birth. The fact that this young lady was the daughter of a slave and was also a child who was sold off as a slave.

Indeed.

Indeed, it was exactly on the third day, Lord.

Despite not having seen him, the Imperial Princess babbled smoothly as if she understood His Lordship, and His Lordship as well was able to accurately predict what the Imperial Princess would do because he understood her, despite not being able to see her.

This young lady carefully observed the elderly man. A deeply seamed face, a smile that appeared as if it were overflowing with goodwill towards people, without a doubt, this man was the biological father that had given birth to this young lady and had also violated her.

“I rushed here urgently after I heard the news that you were here. Aha, but what is this? This father of yours is a human and you are the child of a human, and yet, why is the place where you are standing at not among humans but in the center of demons? Laura, return to the place where you rightfully must be.”

“.....”

This young lady’s father.

The place where she rightfully must be.

Was this young lady’s biological father referring to that dust-filled library as the place where this young lady must be? That small room where one had to offer their body once in order to receive a single meal? The name of the prison where this young lady had tried to disappear just like that by starving herself to death, but without fail, her father would break down the door and keep this young lady alive, and by keeping her alive, he kept her dead.

This young lady quietly closed her eyes. The sound of cicadas that could still be vividly heard were there, and between the bug cries that compactly resonated all around, a groan crawled through.

—— Laura, uh. Laura…….

When this young lady's father violated her, this young lady was silent.

She did not resist.

This young lady did not wish to raise her nails and leave her mark by ripping into his shoulder blades. People who do not want to disappear from the world are bound to grab onto something, but the only place that this young lady could grab was her father's exposed back. Whenever this young lady's father groaned slightly into this young lady's thigh, stomach, and face, the thought that this human still fairly wants to live would cross her mind.

Well.

Since this young lady boasted an immense amount of beauty, it was not like this young lady was unable to understand her father. If there were a large rod attached to this young lady's lower body and, after throwing a slight amount of this young lady's ethical conscience away, this young lady had the ability to freely penetrate the most beautiful woman in the world, then this young lady would test out the effectiveness of her rod without any hesitation. If you do not use it in times like those, then for what reason were you born with one?

—— I love you, Laura. I sincerely love you…….

—— I am doing all this because I love you. What is wrong? You are acting strangely. What is it, you keep behaving weirdly.

“…….”

Aah.

This young lady could say this confidently now that she has met His Lordship. That was not love. That behavior, which had harmed, turned, and twisted this young lady, was not and could never be love. If there was love in the world, then it must not become something like that. How could forcing yourself onto another person and being in a position where you have no other choice but to embrace them, be called love?

If something like that was love, then this young lady will forever live cold.

There was no one who could accept this young lady and there was no one this young lady could accept.

In truth, there was only a single type of love that people like His Lordship, this young lady, and Miss Lapis were capable of. Not a love where we loved each other, but a love where we all loved a single thing together. That alone was the one and only livelihood that could avoid ruin. The one and only. In order for people like us to survive, the one and only……. As we would die if we loved in a different method. As we would kill and would also die, the one and only…….

Something quietly brushed against this young lady's cheek and flowed by.

Beside this young lady, the captain of the Royal Guard muttered in a tone that felt as if it were crawling on the floor.

“Your Excellency Acting General……?”

“The world is quite damned, Captain. This young lady was not born because she wished to be born and she was not raised like this because she aspired to be raised this way, and yet, why must this young lady handle her entire life on her own? This young lady cannot forgive anyone.”

She must not even try to forgive.

“This young lady does not have that kind of strength.”

She must not even try to think differently.

“No ability.”

This young lady is merely tempted to kill the human before her.

Aah.

“This young lady is incompetent……. This young lady is, boundlessly incompetent. This young lady has no other choice but to live the way she was born. Even if this young lady lives in that regard, that is not living. The Imperial Princess’ words were correct. This young lady is a corpse, a doll. However, it cannot be helped. This young lady is incompetent…….”

“…….”

Humbaba, the Captain of the Royal Guard carefully grabbed this young lady’s forearm.

The Captain uttered ‘Mm, mm’ for a long time as if she were trying to audibly select her words inside of her mouth before eventually, she smiled gaily.

“Yup! That’s right. Really, the world is damn jumbled! Moreover, the General is damn incompetent as well. Even if you kill ten thousand and know how to slaughter a hundred thousand, what can you do when you can’t even kill something like your own past? Ah hah ha! But it’s okaaaay. General, it’s completely fine.”

Captain Humbaba laughed.

“If need be, then we can kill master and commit suicide all together!”

“…….”

“Ahahah. It’s a relief that there’s still a lot of people in the world

who are trying to kill our master. 'How dare someone like you attempt to take our master's liiife?', and we have to be the ones to kill those people first, right? That's why, General, endeavor with all your strength and kill a lot! Until the day when there isn't even a single person, who wants to kill our master, left in the entire world!"

The witches shrieked with laughter. Delightfully like devils and innocently like children, the witches dispersed heated laughter throughout the air. This young lady was certain that she had seen the spring sun, which thus far was only stagnated on the pools of mud, had at last begun to flow because of the sound of the witches' laughter.

Was that it? Did this young lady simply need a person who would die together with her?

This young lady imagined herself being killed by a person other than His Lordship. That was unforgivable. This young lady also imagined His Lordship being murdered by someone other than this young lady. That was unpardonable.

I see.

That was so. That was it. That was the case…….

This young lady nodded her head.

"That man. This young lady dislikes the sight of him. Sweep them away and bring him here."

"Yeess, Your Excellency!"

The witches jubilantly flew into the air. The witches had a monopoly of the sky which had little vapor since the rainy season was over. Throughout the air, the witches scattered the gunpowder from their pouches and dropped flames. The enemy formation instantly collapsed and dispersed.

Did they perhaps assume that this young lady would not ruthlessly

attack her biological father? The Imperial Princess most likely sent him as a disposable card anyway. If this young lady is persuaded, then that would be the best case scenario, if this young lady's heart wavers, then that was what the Imperial Princess was aiming for, and if this young lady kills her own father, then the Imperial Princess could utilize that politically as it is. This sort of calculation must have been contained within this action.

If this young lady was a single person, then she would have even considered realistic calculations.

“La-Laura……! You, what are you……?”

But this young lady was not alone.

A man who was much, much more competent than this young lady was standing behind her.

Even if this young lady were to go around stirring battlefields however she pleased, there was an individual who was supporting her from behind and will always pick up after her.

Therefore.

Right now, this young lady will live however she pleases.

“Father.”

This young lady looked down at her father who the witches had dragged before her after having bound his limbs. He looked this way with a face that appeared as if he could not believe what was happening. A pitiful man. Does he even know the fact that he had been used by the Imperial Princess?

If he was able to persuade this young lady and bring her to the side of the Crusaders, then that was like establishing an exploit that will remain throughout history. The man standing before this young lady was most likely lured here by those honeyed words. Blame yourself who was foolish enough to have been deceived by that.

“Laura…….”

“That is right, Father. It is your Laura. The girl who was your Laura is here. For what reason did you deliberately roll all the way to a perilous place like this? This is a battlefield where devils salivate. This is not a place where a careless man, such as you Father, should ever dare set your foot in.”

This young lady knelt down on one knee and matched her father’s eye level. He must have felt kindness from this young lady’s words as his face had brightened up. He seemed to have sensed a hope that, at the very least, he will not lose his life.

This young lady lifted her father’s right arm and pressed it firmly against her cheek. The arm that had violated and suppressed this young lady. That monster’s strong and rough palm was now ticklish.

“Thank you for giving birth to this young lady, Father.”

“I-I am also happy that you are my daughter.”

“Mhm. Then you will also be able to depart happily.”

This young lady smiled brilliantly.



Just now, this young lady may have made the most beautiful smile she has ever made since she was first born.

This young lady could feel it herself.

This young lady's father blinked.

“What……?”

“From this point forth, this young lady is no longer Father's Laura, but instead, she is simply His Lordship's Farnese. Although this young lady is not incredibly happy about being His Lordship's Farnese, it seems to be enough for this young lady to continue living. This young lady was able to bask in this much satisfaction thanks to you, Father, for having given birth to this young lady, so how could she not possibly express her final gratitude?”

This young lady took out a dagger from her clothes and before the opposition could even utter another word, she slit the throat of the man before her. A crimson red line spread open and blood splurged out. Although the man struggled, this young lady did not let go of his right arm till the bitter end. This young lady kept it pressed against her cheek firmly until the man went limp.

“Please die painfully. Duke of Farnese, this young lady is happy that she was able to kill you.”

Ack, ack, the man vomited blood as he collapsed. This young lady stroked the man's head for a long time. The witches were laughing together while taking the lives of the other captives. ‘Kill and kill again’, the words which His Lordship had once said to this young lady were occurring here. Since His Lordship's words were a verbal promise, there was never a day where his words were never realized. The flag, which His Lordship had earlier bestowed, was fluttering above our heads due to the gentle breeze.

Authority for blood.

Blood for authority.

Ah, the spring day amidst the screaming of the captives was beautiful. This young lady sat down on the mud where blood was being spilled and shut her eyes. The puddle of blood, which this young lady's father had shed, viscously received the weight of this young lady's body. For the first time in this young lady's life, her heart pounded in anticipation for the approaching seasons.

This young lady killed her biological father on this day.

And on this day, this young lady became His Lordship's child.

▯ **The King of Peasants, Rank 71st, Dantalian**

Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 10

Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance, Simple Prison

An altar was set up at the bottom of the hill that was visible from the prison. It wasn't a fancy altar. As it was an altar that was made so that the army, which had faced a poor defeat, could quell the anger of the Gods, fanciness was a luxury that was unworthy of them. However, even if it was not fancy, Barbatos was a woman who knew how to make things pretty.

"I heard that the number of skulls your girlie collected in the meantime easily reaches the thousands. If we erect a tower with those, then that'd be the perfect decoration for the ancestral rites."

In short, it was a suggestion to make a tower of skulls. Although it was a design that went so astray from being sane that it would make someone's head feel dull, performing an ancestral rite with the skulls of the enemy was appropriate to use as a justification. Above all, Farnese was very pleased by it.

"Mhm. Your Lordship's lover has good taste. The skull has the most beautiful physical form in the human body. When holding a religious service, is it not obvious that displaying only the most beautiful region of the human body is appropriate? This young lady supports the tower of skulls."

"Don't try to buddy up with me, you human girlie. What do you, who was born with muddy blood, think you're doing by thoughtlessly speaking informally with a monarch? If you weren't Dantalian's acting general, then you would have died by my hands a hundred times over."

Although Barbatos complained, she prepared the stage anyway. She utilized her troops and stacked the skulls in a neat pile. Farnese

possessed the skulls of privates, the skulls of noncommissioned officers, the skulls of captains, and the skulls of commanders, all separated by category, so the tower was piled up according to ranks. The privates were at the very bottom and the commanders were at the very top. Alas, that was the chain of command, it was the chagrin of military personnel who were treated according to their ranks even after death.

Humans held their ancestral rites at dawn and demons held theirs at dusk. The rain had ceased and the evening sun was seeping into the transparent sky. Each skull that was smoothly cleaned, received the setting sun and glowed a bright red, and occasionally, amber.

“Hmmm.”

Barbatos stretched.

“Now the preparations are over. Let’s quickly spray some blood over the ancestral rites table and get this over with. We have to kill the Imperial Princess as well, and also torture those snakes lurking in the rear. Iyaaah, since there are so many bastards we have to kill, this year is going to be an abundant year.”

“Barbatos, if you do not attach an obscene word at the end of every one of your sentences, then do you perhaps contract malaria? Regardless of whether they are traitors now, they were once one of our followers. Please be a bit more solemn.”

“Whether they die by a solemn bastard or a frivolous bastard, in the position of the guys who are going to die, they’re sons of bitches and those sons of bitches are them, so what’s the point?”

“Haa. At any rate, people like you……. Oh well. This lady will go down first, Dantalian. This lady will see you later.”

The two Demon Lords went down the hill side by side. Their shadows stretched out all the way to the prison where I was seated.

Time passed and the Demon Lords from the Mountain Faction and

the Plains Faction slowly started to gather down below and took their seats. Eventually, all of the Demon Lords were finally present at the time when the sunset was at its zenith. Although the Demon Lords were talking in whispers and chatting away, they all closed their mouths once the ancestral rite had begun. The bottom of the hill became still.

“.....”

“.....”

Several priests came forward and started to recite sutras. The memorial service progressed calmly. Each time the priests kowtowed, the Demon Lords would stand up and do a deep bow as well. After several bows in worship, which meaning could not be understood.

Step.

Farnese walked out into the center of the ceremony. Farnese was barefooted. Farnese stepped on the soil, that was still wet, with her white feet. Even though I was far away in this prison and could not see Farnese's face, it felt as if the sound of pitter-patter resonated each time she took a step.

Farnese sat down in front of the piano without even greeting the Demon Lords. I felt as if I could hear the sound of a portion of the Demon Lords voicing their complaints. According to Barbatos, it seems there were quite the number of people who considered the very act of letting, not a demon, but a human participate in our memorial service as blasphemous. Barbatos declared that, since those soldiers were killed by that little one, it would only be correct if she were the one to play the melody and soothe the Gods. Since those were not incredibly wrong words, the other Demon Lords said that they understood and looked over it.

“.....”

Farnese slowly placed the end of her fingers on the keys.

I did not offer any particular words to Farnese who must have probably returned after having killed her own father yesterday. I believed that she was able to think on her own now, and I also believed that she will be able to overcome it on her own.

Therefore, as this was a recital to purge the long-standing traitors.

At the same time, this was also a concert that announced Farnese's farewell to her past.

I rested my chin on my hand while sitting in my chair and gazed at Farnese. Today was the day that officially marked the fact that I have been in this prison for over a week. Although I was still in this prison, I was watching over Farnese closer than I have ever done so before.

“.....”

And.

The performance of blood began.

Chapter Five

Cadenza

"Why is she still alive?"

"It'd be great if she killed herself."

"They say that harlot sold her body to the demons."

"Didn't they say that she's a lady from a Duke's House? Surely not."

"Despite that, she's nothing more than a whore."

"They say that her hip skills are impressive. Like this, ahah? Hiyah? Like this and that. Appetizingly every night. In truth, people also say that he didn't take her in to be his acting general but to be his concubine instead."

"So, what's her name?"

"Laura De Farnese."

"I've been hearing only that bitch's name lately."

"Duke Farnese was wise. It's only appropriate to nip the bud when that bitch was really young. Think about it. Even when she was sold off as a slave, she grew up to be that atrocious. If that bitch weren't a slave, then how much more terrible would she have become?"

"They say she even has a hobby of collecting skulls."

"A filthy and boorish bitch."

"An annoying and tenacious bitch."

"Like I said, the bitch."

"Though I'm not sure if she's crude, and I'm unsure whether she's vulgar or not."

"In any case, the bitch who it wouldn't be strange if she were both."

"If anything, the girl who feels as if she has to be applicable to both."

"One, two. One, two."

"They say that she not only collects skulls, but she piles them up and plays the piano beside them as well. While humming. She probably gets excited by the bones of her kind that she slaughtered. I wouldn't be surprised if the number of skulls she gathered and gathered reached tens of thousands now."

"Her nature has rotted all the way to her roots. Doesn't it almost seem as if she were a scumbag that was born in order to curse the world?"

"Yup. I can't bear the fact that that sort of person is breathing. It'd be great if she just died already. If that's not possible, then she should go somewhere that I can't see, albeit I can't even see her now, I wish she'd completely fuck off to some remote faraway place where even news of her won't reach me."

"It'd be great."

"If she disappeared."

"Vanished from our sight."

"If she died right this instant."

"That dog-like bitch."

"I'll take that bitch's head before I die!"

"But don't ignore them completely, scoff at them whenever the opportunity presents itself. By doing so, we can show them the fact that we're ignoring them more excellently and explicitly."

"Kill!"

"Kill her!"

"What will change if we kill her?"

"Regardless, we still have to kill her."

"But we'll be the ones to die."

"I heard it as well. They died again, right?"

"Is this, that?"

"They say that's this."

"One, two. One, two."

"It would have been better if she hadn't been born in the first place. If that were the case, then everyone would have been happy. There isn't a single person in the world who would welcome that girl."

"The plague-like fellow who goes around needlessly encouraging disorder in our peaceful continent of humanity."

"That bitch's mother probably lamented after giving birth to that bitch. Ah, for me to have given birth to a leper like this. It would probably have been better if she gave birth to a handful of poisonous snakes."

"She'll most likely be thrown away by the Demon Lords after she's been used, anyway."

"Did you see it?"

"Yes."

"What will you do if we did see her, and what will you do if we didn't? If we saw her, then we'd have also described the things which we haven't seen, and if we didn't see her, then we'd have just described the things which we could see. Whether we saw her or not, that bitch will still be a bad bitch, a crazy bitch, and a completely insane bitch, anyway. This is what we determined, so seeing her and not seeing her is quite the secondary question."

"If it doesn't matter whether I see her or not, then I'd rather not see her if possible. I'd die if I do."

"But I heard she's really fucking pretty."

"I heard her voice is quite smooth, as well."

"Are you sure you saw it correctly?"

"Try telling us what she looks like."

"She had black hair. It was beautiful."

"Her red hair looked as if it were on fire. It was disgusting."

"She was tall! Really tall!"

"From what I could see, she was really short."

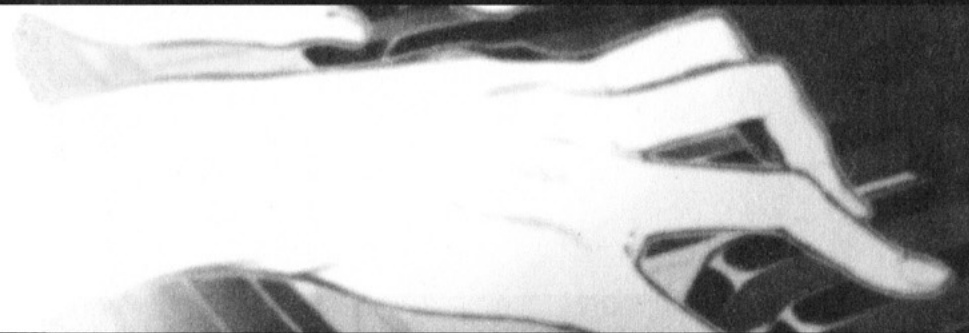
"So? Did you see her or not?"

"Too much rain was falling. Rain."

Quiet. Shh.

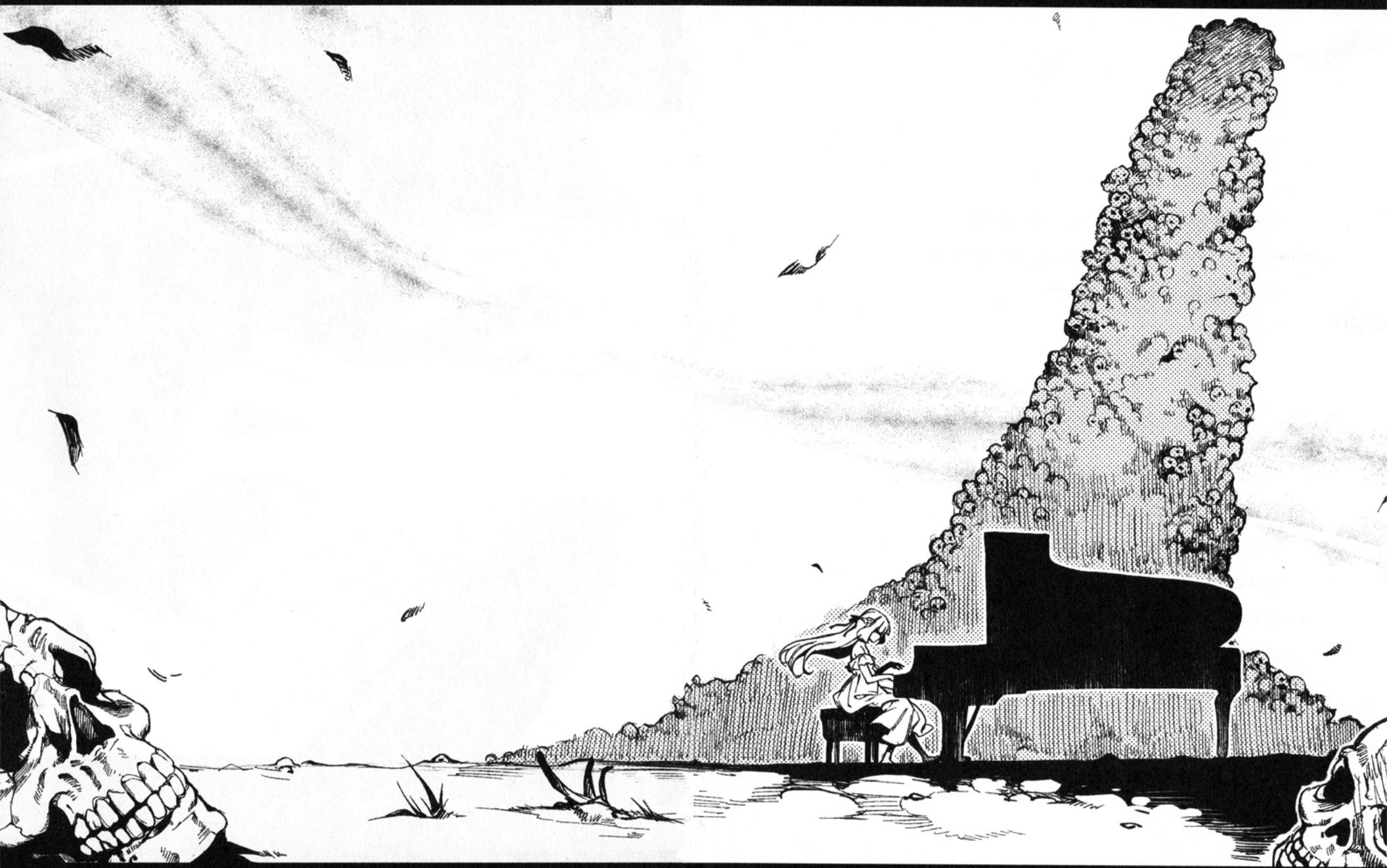
Quietly.

And.



She——.





—She performed.

As if she intended to perform like this from the very beginning.

While receiving the setting sun, that was just about to come to an end, by herself.

Saying that this is a place to breathe.

Quietly.

As she pressed down on the keys with her slender fingers,
she stepped on the pedals with her mud-covered feet.

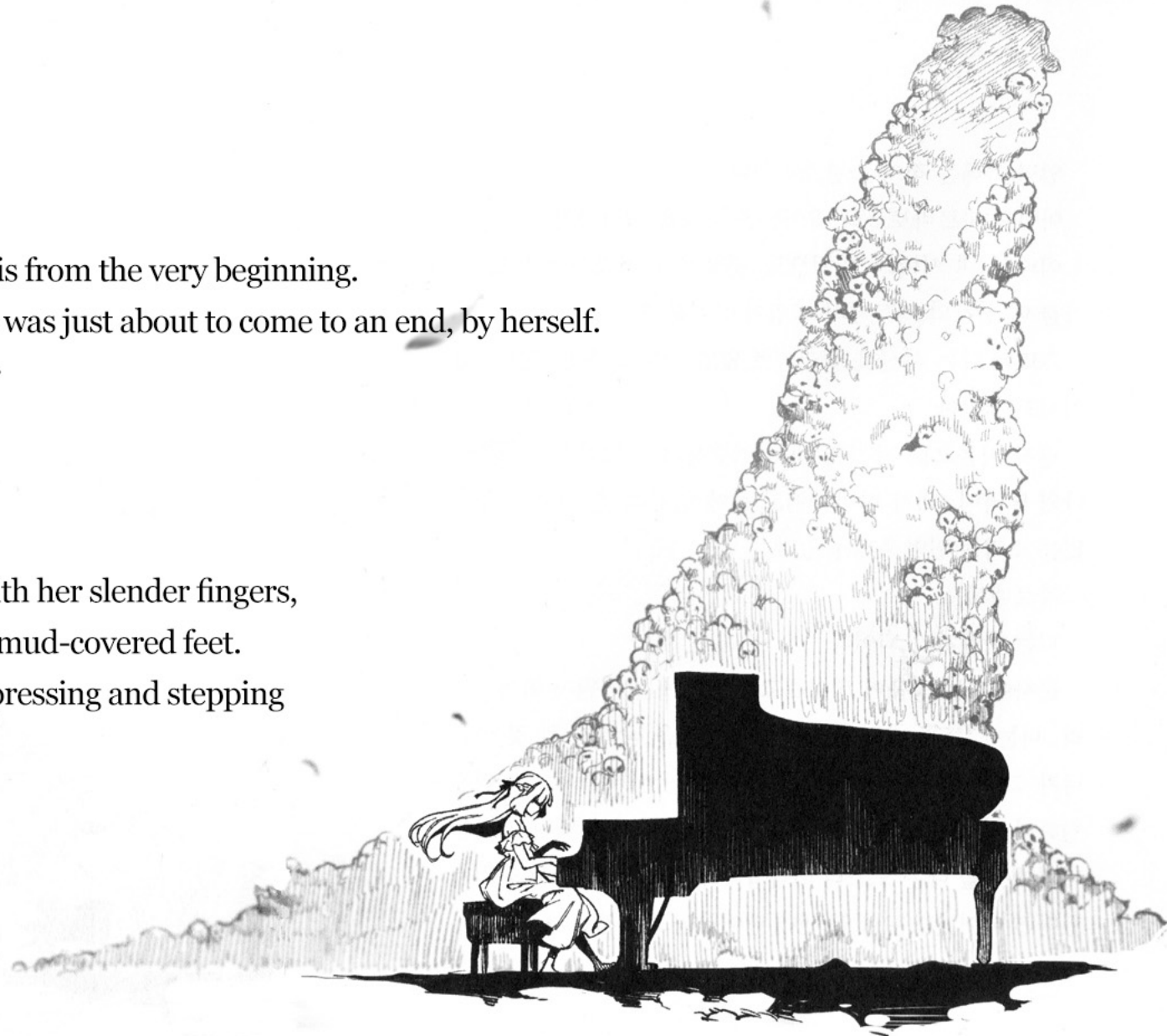
With each note and tune from her pressing and stepping

Laura

Laura

Laura—

in order for this to resonate.



The enemies were noisy at the bottom of the hill.
Barbatos and Paimon most likely had started the purge.
Occasionally, blood dimly scattered into my line of sight,
and sometimes, screams could faintly be heard within
the outer layer of my hearing.

However, I did not turn my gaze nor did I focus my ears there.

I simply comfortably listened to the tearless sounds of
my adopted daughter, my daughter, the single family
member I had decided to accept and embrace, who had
started to perform about herself for the first time.

Farnese.

Become a slaughterer.

Be a hero to the military and be a savior to the people.

Your name will remain in history just as you have
always desired. Because you yearned for it that much,
I will grant it. Your ambition to kill your own father,
remain in history, and shine more brilliantly than
anyone else, I will tell you that all of that is beautiful.

If you had a sin, then it should be the fact that you were
born, but how can one's birth be a sin?

Oh, Gods.

Forgive that child's sin.

If thou are incompetent there,
then I shall forgive it here.

FIN.

▯ **Demon Lord of Benevolence, Rank 9th, Paimon**
Empire Calendar: Year 1506, Month 4, Day 10
Bruno Plains, Army of the Crescent Alliance

“.....**H**mm. Let’s see here. It’s about time.”

“Yes. Let us begin.”

Without needing the other side to say so first.

This lady and Barbatos took out our masks and put them on.

It was not only the two of us. The majority of the Demon Lords who were watching the performance put on masks as well. Only the 7 betrayers were dubious and started to whisper among one another. They were people that ridiculed not only the factions but the ideal of the Crescent Alliance itself. The embrace of the world is not sufficient enough to forgive them.

—— What is this fuss?

—— Do they intend to hold a surprise concert.....?

—— In any case, that child’s performance is rather......

It was at that moment.

Blood splattered here and there from the seats that were arranged for the Demon Lords. The ones wearing masks stabbed, impaled with

swords, and hacked with axes the bodies of the ones who were not wearing masks. The ancestral rite ceremony that was tranquil with music instantly turned into a realm of Hell.

—— Wait, what are you……!?

The traitors rolled on the ground and stretched out their arms. Their bodies were half covered in dirt and half covered in blood. Even if they stretched out their arms and requested for someone to rescue them, be it the Mountain Faction or the Plains Faction, there was no one who would show them mercy. Their fingers were soon stabbed by spears and severed by blades, making them fly throughout the air one finger at a time. Screams and groans mixed together, causing the auditorium to descend into being a slaughterhouse in a flash.

Those trying to kill people.

Those trying to not be killed by people.

Those who are trying to block the people that are attempting to escape.

Those who use the people beside them as a sacrifice and try to run away.

This lady spoke emotionlessly.

“……How should we absorb the military troops of the traitors?”

“It’d be difficult to manage them, so is there really a need to absorb them?”

Barbatos yawned. She lifted her wine glass to take a sip, but she then remembered the fact that she was wearing a mask and cursed.

“Fuck. In any case, just finishing them off would be fine since it’d

be easier on the mind. There's probably a lot of spies hidden among them, anyway. Picking each and every one of them out would be a chore."

In that moment, a single Demon Lord rushed to us and groveled on the ground. He was not a member of this lady's faction. This lady recalls that he was one of the low ranking Demon Lords that Barbatos led around.

—"Your Excellency Barbatos! S-Save me! Those people went insane and are……!"

However, before he could even finish his sentence. The air was split by Barbatos' light downward hand gesture, and that formless blade decapitated the man's head just like that. With its head gone, the body shook back and forth before falling backwards with a thud. Barbatos yawned once more.

"Haamm. We should have done this sooner. We ended up fucking around and pointlessly throwing him into prison. I thought that Dantalian had sex with you so I had contemplated on whether I should get rid of him or not."

"No. Like I said, that was a misunderstanding."

"That's if I can easily believe the words you say, bitch."

"This lady is going to say this now, but during the 2nd expedition, this lady suggested that we should retreat quickly since something felt amiss, you know? The one who did not believe that and asserted that we should continue advancing until the very end was you."

"……Was it like that?"

"It was. Who is calling who a fool all the time, truly."



This lady shut her lips. Soon after, Barbatos went silent as well. For the first time in quite a long time, the two of us were seated side by side and watched the girl who was still playing the piano despite the slaughter that was occurring. Barbatos looked up towards the sky and muttered.

“It’s spring. Hey, the weather is good. It’d be easy to kill people.”

Those words most likely were not directed to anyone specific. However, this lady unconsciously raised her head as well. In that place, the clouds were drifting across the evening sky, indifferent to what was happening on the ground.

“Yes. It is already spring.”

Similar to how the sky is indifferent to our affairs, we also kill the people who must be killed while being unrelated to the sky.

Although it was an affair that momentarily, flowed by on some spring day.

Fin.

Nowadays, I have been writing while going to and leaving the office together with my friends. Since I cannot write well at home, let's write while outside of home, with that thought in mind, I made a mutual understanding. After leaving for work at 7AM and typing away at the typewriter, just at the moment when I felt delighted because of the fact that I am able to write better here than when I am at home, a sudden realization came to be a step late: I started writing because I didn't like commuting every day to a company, but isn't this no different to working at a company.....?

However, realization has always been something that came late to me, and since I have already made a contract, I have no other choice but to continue this office life for at least 1 year. For that reason, this is an afterword that is being typed out much after the main text.

First things first, my gratitude towards the illustrator of (Dungeon Defense), cocorip. And also my unstinted worship and praise. Although I always contemplate on what I should write in the afterword, there is a single thing that does not require any thought, and that is my compliments towards cocorip. That's because, similar to how we don't hesitate whenever we write self-evident facts like ' $1+1=2$ ', my fingers do not waver even slightly whenever I write praises about cocorip's illustrations. Although cocorip's color illustrations and monochrome illustrations have always been top-tier since a long time ago, the illustrations in volume 4 almost felt as if they were pointing at the other illustrations until now and emanating a last boss-like dignity while uttering "That was not merazoma^[1]. It was a mera.....". Since even the weather and scenery, which should be difficult to express in a black and white illustration, were done perfectly, I am contemplating on whether I should go and make a religion where we worship the illustrator. Even if I don't particularly spread the belief, there are already several believers among the other

authors who have gathered so it's not impossible. Ah, oh mighty God! Please continue to look after me.

An audio drama CD is being released along with this volume 4. The events that happen in the drama CD occurs around 1 month before Laura De Farnese gives her speech. Since it was my first time working on an audio drama, I was watching the voice actors/voice actresses, musicians, and directors working on scene, with anticipation. Compared to other audio dramas, I tried writing the script with a feeling that's close to that of a general comedy, but if other people were all able to enjoy the recording process, then I couldn't be any happier. Voice actor Nam Dohyeong who played the role of Dantalian, voice actress Jeong Hyaewon who played the role of Laura De Farnese, and voice actress Kim Chaeha who played the role of Lapis Lazuli, thank you all for your hard work!

As expected, the opening song and the ending song that were included with the audio drama were splendid beyond description. Although the two songs have a different feeling to them, I believe that they both magnificently have an aspect of <Dungeon Defense> contained within them. (The ending song, <Desert Rose>, was even sung passionately by the voice actor Nam Dohyeong, during the Anime Sound Festival!)

I express my thanks to the director, singer, voice actors/voice actresses, composers, lyricists, production director, design director, and the editor who was able to connect all of this together.

This manuscript was late beyond imagination. The responsibility for the late manuscript is completely on me. I thought that I would be able to complete the manuscript by September, but what's this? It became late and late again and at some point, it had become December. During even September, October, and November, I asked the editorial department if they could wait a bit longer....., and on all

such occasions, my editor waited patiently. I have no excuse for this delay that lasted for no less than 3 months. I can only feel apologetic towards the editor that is in charge of me.

The last people who I wish to thank is, just like always, you readers.

As I mentioned earlier, the manuscript for volume 4 was postponed several times. Despite that, towards the readers who waited, picked this book up, and read all the way to this point, I can only say that I am sorry for the late release and also that if you were able to have even the slightest bit of an enjoyable read, then it is a relief..... Thank you. Just the thought of volume 01 to volume 04 of <Dungeon Defense> being placed in a row on one of my reader's bookshelf, fills me with deep jovial thought. As much as how the days of commuting to an office will continue for me, I will endeavor to release the next volume faster than the previous ones.

2016-12-6

In an office where the floor is cold

Yoo Heon Hwa

Translator's Notes

1. [\[↑\]](#) [‘Merazoma’](#) and [‘Mera’](#) are skills from Dragon Quest. Merazoma being the stronger version of Mera.